



Northern Ireland Museums Council

# **Mapping Trends in Northern Ireland's Local Museums**

**2016**

# Key Findings



39 Accredited Local Museums

**636,952**  
*Visitors*

*23 of the 39 local museums are Free Entry*

*50,669 Children attended Curriculum-based programmes*

*£9.1 million Tourism Impact*

*70,802 Informal Learning Beneficiaries*

*479 FTE Jobs and 927 volunteers*

*218 Publications*

*368 formal Learning Programmes delivered*

**Collections Standards**

- **Environment**
- **Documentation** ↓
- **Security**
- **Housekeeping** ↑
- **Storage**

*93 Temporary Exhibitions*

*£71k spend on Acquisitions*

**Big Issues:**  
Security of future funding  
Storage of collections  
Capacity to deliver education and learning programmes  
Profiling of visitors and users

## Foreword

As institutions that enable people to explore the collections they hold in trust, for inspiration, learning and enjoyment, museums make a unique contribution to our social, cultural and economic advancement. This ranges from being a vital component in what we have to offer to the tourist, to being centres of local identity; from acting as cultural hubs for community engagement, to playing a vital role in creating a diverse and confident society; and from delivering events and activities that enhance our well-being, to being vital resources for schools, researchers and the cultural industries.

To maximise the rich benefits offered by our museums and to further unlock their potential, we must first have a comprehensive picture on the facts and figures on the sector, together with a clear picture of the challenges and issues that the sector faces. These are essential foundations for good policy making and for developing clear and coherent strategies to take our museums forward in the service of the people who work and live in, and visit, Northern Ireland.

*Mapping Trends 2016* marks the fourth occasion that the Council has presented this overview. It gives us a snapshot of the infrastructure, resources and governance of local museums, their learning and audience development activity, as well as the standards being achieved in the care, conservation and management of their collections. As has been the case with the previous reports, this will be of interest to many, both inside and outside of our local museums.

The publication of these results and findings is most timely. They will inevitably inform the strategies needed to deliver the Outcomes of the Northern Ireland Executive's Programme for Government, prove useful to future planning within local councils, and inform the development of local museums too.

I take this opportunity to commend this report to you, and to thank our local museums for their commitment and contribution to making this survey so robust.



**Professor Elizabeth Crooke**  
Chair, NIMC.

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## Mapping Trends in Northern Ireland's Local Museums 2016

### Introduction

This document marks the fourth occasion that the Northern Ireland Museums Council has presented the results of its comprehensive survey of the local museums in Northern Ireland. Having good intelligence to hand on all aspects of how our museums operate underpins the Council's work. NIMC was established in 1993 by Ministerial order, with a remit to support local museums (ie non-national museums) in maintaining and improving their standards of collections care and public service, and to promote a coherent framework of museum provision. Given this focus, Mapping Trends does not include National; Museums Northern Ireland<sup>1</sup>.

The Museum Accreditation scheme is the UK minimum standards scheme for museums and galleries. It is maintained and managed centrally by Arts Council England and the Northern Ireland Museums Council is responsible for administering the scheme in Northern Ireland, as it relates to the local museums. Museums seeking recognition under the standard are assessed against criteria relating to Organisational Health, Collections, and Users and their Experiences, with a view to helping museums develop their resilience through effective forward planning, attend to critical aspects of collection management and to encourage them to be responsive to user needs and expectations. Only those museums which were recognised under the Museum Accreditation scheme on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 were included in this survey.

The publication of the last *Mapping Trends* coincided with the issuing of the Northern Ireland Museums Policy, which one of the fundamental 'building blocks' of the Northern Ireland Assembly's Programme for Government 2011-15. Indeed, both documents had the same core structure concerning Developing Audiences; Education and Learning; Collections Development, Care, Management and Use; and, Infrastructure, Investment and Resources, with the Policy setting out a series of goals for each area that were informed by the findings coming through the *Mapping Trends* surveys. The last five years have seen further developments in Ministerial and Departmental priorities, reductions in the levels of financial support for museums, together with the restructuring of central and local government in Northern Ireland. All have had an impact on how museums operate, as is reflected in this report.

Previous *Mapping Trends* surveys have provided a robust evidence base for NIMC's advocacy and business planning. In this instance, however, given the current development of a new Programme for Government, these findings will prove particularly significant in providing a sound evidence base for government, for museums and for the Council itself.

### Methodology

Mapping Trends was published previously in 2002, 2007 and 2012. While the questionnaires associated with each had discrete questions that picked up on issues pertinent to the time, all contained a series of core questions across the four key areas. This approach has been retained for the current survey. It asked Accredited museums to provide information on their

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<sup>1</sup> NMNI was established under the Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 and as such is funded directly by government. Its role is to "care for and present the inspirational collections that reflect the creativity, innovation, history, culture and people of Northern Ireland." Until 2014 NMNI operated four museum sites - the Ulster Museum, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Ulster American Folk Park, and the Armagh County Museum. As part of the recent reform of local government, the Armagh County Museum reverted back to the control of the local council. See <http://nmni.com/home/about-us>

operations and activities for the financial year 2014-15 and to confirm certain details were accurate at the time when the questionnaire was being completed. The survey was undertaken by NIMC staff, who visited all participating museums between October 2015 and January 2016. Most questionnaires were completed 'face-to-face' with museum personnel, with some being filled in by museum personnel and then forwarded to NIMC, with further clarification and supplementary material being provided later as required. In all 39 of the 40 Accredited local museums completed the survey.

As far as possible the same questions were used in 2015 as in 2011 in order to allow comparisons and trends to be revealed. A case in point is the series of questions asked on Collections Development, Care, Management and Use. At the end of 2005 NIMC drew upon the research undertaken by peer organisations to establish a scoring system by which museums could be assessed on their environment, housekeeping, storage, documentation, and security and risk assessment. This exercise was repeated in 2007 and the same questions were incorporated into the 2011 *Mapping Trends*. The answers provided were matched against the range statements ascribed to each of the five areas and from this a 'score' was arrived at for each museum. As a consequence, NIMC is able to provide an overview of how the associated standards have changed over the last decade.

In other sections some questions were adapted in light of ambiguities previously identified, while others were introduced in order to capture information on prevalent matters. As well as collecting the more objective data, respondents were invited to identify the main issues they were currently facing across the four areas - Developing Audiences; Education and Learning; Collections Development, Care, Management and Use, and Infrastructure, Investment and Resources. The report that follows examines each of these aspects in turn.

# Infrastructure, Investment and Resources

## Museum Governance

The museum sector in Northern Ireland currently comprises 43 museums recognised under the Museum Accreditation scheme. Of these, three come under the aegis of National Museums Northern Ireland. The other 40 make up the local museum sector.

Of the 39<sup>2</sup> museums surveyed

- 20 are run by local councils
- 19 are independent and voluntary museums

The contact details of each local museum included in this review are given at Appendix I.

### Local Councils

The restructuring of local government, consequent to the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, came into effect in early April 2015. This saw 11 new councils replacing the previous 26 city, district and borough councils. Nine of the new councils deliver museum services, as follows;

<b>Council area</b>	<b>Museums</b>
Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council	Museum at the Mill Sentry Hill Historic House and Visitor Centre
Ards and North Down Borough Council	North Down Museum
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council	Armagh County Museum Barn Museum Craigavon Museum Service F E McWilliam Gallery and Studio
Belfast City Council	Not presently operating a museum service
Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council	Ballycastle Museum Ballymoney Museum Coleraine Museum Green Lane Museum Limavady Museum
Derry City and Strabane District Council	Tower Museum Strabane Museum Service
Fermanagh and Omagh District Council	Fermanagh County Museum
Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council	Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum
Mid and East Antrim Borough Council	Andrew Jackson US Rangers Carrickfergus Museum Mid-Antrim Museum
Mid-Ulster District Council	Not presently operating a museum service
Newry, Mourne and Down District Council	Down County Museum Newry and Mourne Museum

The Museums and Galleries (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 sets out how local district councils may provide museums and galleries, stating that,

*“a district council, either alone or together with another district council or any other person, may provide and maintain museums and galleries”*

<sup>2</sup> One museum, the Strabane Museum Service, which is operated by Derry City and Strabane District Council, chose not to participate in the survey.

Previously this statute was the basis of two partnerships; the Mid-Antrim Museum Service (that comprised four museums and operated through an arrangement between Ballymena, Larne, Newtownabbey and Carrickfergus Borough Councils) and the Causeway Museum Service (made up of four museums and operated through an arrangement comprising Coleraine, Limavady and Ballymoney Borough Councils, and Moyle District Council). The new council structure has for the most part consolidated these services; with the museums at Carrickfergus, Larne and Ballymena now being run by the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, and all of the museums which formed the Causeway Museum Service coming under the control of the Causeway and Glens Borough Council.

This restructuring has also seen councils moving from operating a museum venue to delivering museum services. This developing agenda is strengthened by the wider powers and responsibilities granted to councils under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. The associated issues have been explored by NIMC in a number of research papers.<sup>3</sup>

### Independent and Voluntary museums

The independent and voluntary-run museum sector in Northern Ireland recognised under the Museum Accreditation scheme comprises,

- 8 museums, run by two organisations, established under statute (Armagh Public Library; and the National Trust, which operates seven museums)
- 4 are operated by Trusts (Inniskillings Museum, Police Museum, Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum, and Royal Ulster Rifles Museum)
- 7 are constituted as companies limited by guarantee (Downpatrick Railway Museum, Flame – The Gasworks Museum, Garvagh Museum, Milford House Collection, Northern Ireland War Memorial, Railway Preservation Society of Ireland and Somme Museum)

### Charitable status

The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland is in the process of registering all charities in Northern Ireland. To be recognised and registered as a charity an organisation must meet the public benefit requirement as defined in the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 (as amended) and must have purposes which fall under one of 12 descriptions listed in the Act.

Of the 39 local museums surveyed, none of the Council-run museums are registered charities, while 18 independent museums have charitable status and one has an application pending with the Charity Commission.

## **Museums and Standards**

The profile of local museums recognised under the Museum Accreditation Scheme (and its previous iterations) is as follows.

	2001	2006	2011	2015
Council-run museums	18	19	20	21 <sup>4</sup>
Independent museums	15	14	18	19

Several changes in the profile of Accredited local museums have taken place since the 2011 survey:

<sup>3</sup> See: NIMC: *The Future of Northern Ireland's Local Museum Services* (Nov. 2012).

<http://www.nimc.co.uk/research-and-publications/> accessed August 2016

<sup>4</sup> This includes the Strabane Museum Service recognised under the Museum Accreditation Scheme, but which chose not to be included in *Museum Mapping 2016*.



- Armagh County Museum is included following its transfer from National Museums Northern Ireland to the Armagh City, Banbridge and Carrigavon Borough Council.
- Both Larne Museum (operated by the Mid and East Antrim Borough Council) and the Naughton Gallery at Queen (run by Queen's University, Belfast) remain open to the public, but came off the Accreditation register in February and April 2014 respectively.
- The Council-run Limavady Museum and Museum at the Mill became Accredited in June 2014 and April 2015 respectively
- As independent museums, both the Milford House Collection and the Northern Ireland War Memorial were recognised as Accredited Museums in September 2013, as was Garvagh Museum in April 2014.
- Following its closure to the public, the Royal Irish Regiment Museum came off the Accreditation register in February 2014
- The 2011 review of the Museum Accreditation scheme introduced an 'eligible' category as a step towards full Accreditation. The Linen Hall Library in Belfast was granted 'Eligible' status in August 2014.

### **Capital Programmes**

What was perhaps the largest ever capital programme at an independent museum in Northern Ireland was completed in 2015. After an extensive restoration programme, lasting three years and with over £8 million invested, Mount Stewart, operated by the National Trust, fully reopened its doors to the public<sup>5</sup>. At other National Trust properties capital works since 2011 have included the conservation of thatch at Hezlett House, the conversion of a barn building into a tea room and visitor reception area at Springhill House and the development of a new visitor centre at Florence Court in Fermanagh.

In 2012 an ambitious development programme was initiated by the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland which will transform its site at Whitehead and include the redevelopment of its museum facility. The initial phase of this £3.1 million project saw the completion of the station house in 2013 and work continues on transforming "the Society's engine sheds and workshops into a living museum and major tourist attraction where visitors can view heritage vehicles and observe restoration work in progress."<sup>6</sup>

Lately capital projects got underway at Fermanagh County Museum and at Down County Museum. The £3.5 million Fermanagh Gateway Project involves the restoration and refurbishment of four existing buildings within the Enniskillen Castle complex, to create a range of new galleries and event spaces, as well as the construction of a new Visitor Centre at the entrance to the site. It is scheduled to open during the summer of 2016. At Down County Museum the new extension opened in early 2015, costing £680,000. The new galleries include the display of the Downpatrick High Cross, the key objects from the museum's collection of farming and maritime artefacts, a reinterpretation of the history of the Gaol of Down and a new tearoom.

Elsewhere, significant building conservation work was undertaken at the Irish Linen Centre and Lisburn Museum, the expanded catering facilities at the F. E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio was completed, new galleries focused on Christian Heritage, the Bronze Age and a community gallery were developed at North Down Museum, and an exhibition gallery was established at the Andrew Jackson Cottage.

<sup>5</sup> See: <https://ntmountstewartconservationproject.wordpress.com/> accessed August 2016

<sup>6</sup> See: [http://www.steamtrainsireland.com/whitehead\\_2020/](http://www.steamtrainsireland.com/whitehead_2020/) accessed August 2016

## Staffing Levels

Given that museums could not function without their dedicated staff and volunteers, NIMC has been charting the number of people working at local museums, and their type of contracts, since the Mapping Trends survey was initiated in 2001. The profiles since then are as follows.

	Permanent Full-time				Permanent Part-time			
	2001	2006	2011	2015	2001	2006	2011	2015
Council-run museums	68	73	79	73	23	18	23	37
Independent museums	39	40	61	83	24	37	32	62
Total	107	113	140	156	47	55	55	99

	Temporary/Seasonal				Volunteers			
	2001	2006	2011	2015	2001	2006	2011	2015
Council-run museums	14	19	20	50	10	13	16	81
Independent museums	81	94	158	177	151	157	299	846
Total	95	113	178	227	161	170	315	927

Since 2011 it is notable that;

- While there has been an increase in the number of permanent, full-time staff at the local museums, this is accounted for by the independent museums, given the near 8% drop in such staff at the council-run museums,
- The trend of council-run museums employing more permanent part-time staff continues on an upward trajectory, with the independent museums also employing significantly more people on this type of contract. Overall, since 2011, the declarations suggest a near doubling in permanent part-time staff at independent museums,
- The number of seasonal or temporary staff employed in museums continues to rise, with a 27% increase on the 2011 figure, interestingly the number of such staff at council-run museums has more than doubled,
- There has been a tremendous growth in the number of volunteers over the last five years, with the sector now having three times the number of volunteers than declared in 2011: the council-run museums' declarations showing a five-fold increase and the independent museums seeing an increase in the order of 285%.

The following elements need to be taken into account regarding trends in staffing levels;

- The change in the profile of museums participating in the 2015 survey, compared with 2011, is not deemed significant. The three museums that came off the Accreditation register since 2011 had a staff complement totalling 6 full-time, 2 part-time, 8 seasonal/temporary and 5 volunteers, while the six museums included in the survey for the first time employ 6 full-time, 6 part-time, 4 seasonal/temporary and 51 volunteers.<sup>7</sup>
- Nearly half of the increase in volunteers at council-run museums took place at two museums.
- Amongst the independent museums, nearly 60% of the increase in volunteers occurred at properties run by the National Trust. Six other independent museums saw notable increases in volunteers also, with one recording a five-fold increase<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> The Strabane Museum Service had 1 full-time staff member in 2011, and currently has one part-time member of staff, and thus is not material to the findings described.

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that declarations on volunteer numbers by the National Trust properties cover the whole site, not just the Accredited museum, while other staff figures relate to house staff only.

### Salaries and Wages

The 2015 questionnaire replicated a question first asked in 2011 concerning the pay of employees within Northern Ireland's museum sector. The following table shows a breakdown by salary band across the two types of local museum.

Salary bands	Council-run museums		Independent museums	
	2011	2015	2011	2015
Less than £10,000	15	38	174	224
£11,000 - £20,000	57	49	55	48
£21,000 - £30,000	39	52	15	36
£31,000 - £40,000	8	14	5	10
£41,000 - £50,000	3	4	2	3
£50,000 +	0	3	0	1

Over the period there has been a notable growth in the number of part-time and temporary/seasonal staff employed at the local museums, which is reflected in the increase in number falling within the lowest salary band.

### **Economic Impact**

In response to the needs of the sector, NIMC sought information from museums through which the economic impacts of the local museum sector might be estimated. In analysing the data provided, the Association of Independent Museums (AIM) *Economic Value of the Independent Museum*<sup>9</sup> Sector was used to estimate the tourism impact, the employment impact and the impact of spend on goods and services of local museums in Northern Ireland. Volunteer Now's *Volunteer Investment to Value Audit*<sup>10</sup> was used to measure the economic impact of the volunteering in local museums. An exercise to calculate the economic impact of the capital programmes outlined above was not undertaken as part of the survey.

### Tourism Impact

The tourism impact of visits to Northern Ireland's local museums during 2014-15 is estimated at £9,077,651, with the council-run museums having a tourism impact valued at £5,516,115 and independent museums impact being £3,561,536.

The calculation of the tourism impact is based on the following metrics:

- As only adult visits to local museums are used to calculate the economic impact and the museums surveyed were not able to provide such a visitor profile, the calculation is based upon the assumption that two-thirds of museum visitors are adults. This supposition results from research undertaken by DC Research, the company which compiled the AIM economic toolkit, which incorporates this hypothesis.
- 25 of the local museums were able to supply a breakdown of their visitors according to whether they were 'local', 'day visitors', or 'overnight visitors'. However, this meant that 14 of the museums surveyed were unable to do so. In view of this, NIMC has adopted the approach taken by DC Research in compiling the AIM toolkit, namely, to use mean average proportions for local visitors e.g. 47% for small museums (0-9,999 visitors annually), 44% for medium museums (10,000 – 49,000 visitors

<sup>9</sup> This toolkit was produced in 2010 and revised in 2014. See [http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/content/research\\_papers/](http://www.aim-museums.co.uk/content/research_papers/) accessed July 2016

<sup>10</sup> This toolkit was devised in 2010 and updated in 2013. See <http://www.volunteernow.co.uk/supporting-organisations/volunteer-impact-assessment-toolkit/volunteer-investment-to-value-audit> accessed July 2016

annually), and 31% for large museums (more than 50,000 visitors annually). As a conservative estimate it was advised by DC Research to treat all other visitors as day trippers rather than overnights.

- The AIM toolkit makes certain assumptions in estimating how much the different types of visitors spend. For the purposes of this exercise NIMC adopted the assumptions on regional visitor spend.

### Employment Impact

The employment impact of Northern Ireland's local museums during 2014-15 is estimated at 478.65 Full Time Equivalent jobs – 178.82 consequent to council-run museums and 299.83 arising from the independent museums.

This estimate is calculated using the AIM toolkit that;

- determines the 'leakage' of FTE's not living locally,
- makes an assumption on the number of hours worked by temporary/seasonal staff, based on national research,
- formulates the impact based upon the number of direct, indirect and induced employment.

### Impact of spend on goods and services

As part of the 2015 survey museums were asked to detail expenditure on goods and services generally, with detail being sought on specific areas of spend, including conservation, education and learning, and staff and volunteer training. While 19 out of the 39 museums supplied figures, the returns were such that it has not been possible to estimate the impact of expenditure on goods and services with an acceptable degree of accuracy.

### Volunteering Impact

The economic value of the 927 volunteers working at local museum sites is estimated at £855,240 for 2014-15, broken down as follows,

- the 81 volunteers working at council-run museums contributed 20,981 hours with an economic value of £140,573
- there were 846 volunteers at the independent museums, contributing 106,667 hours of work, valued at £714,667

These calculations draw upon the guidance of the Volunteer Now toolkit, including the adoption of the National Minimum Wage in 2014-15 for 21 and over (£6.70/hour) for estimating the economic value of such input.

With the Office of National Statistics stating that the mean average number of hours paid per week for full-time employees was 39.1 in 2015, it may be estimated that volunteer input to local museums was the equivalent of 63 FTE.

Also, the toolkit suggests that the cost of any investment in volunteers (training and management, for example) is subtracted from the overall impact. The 2015 survey did not ask museums to declare investment costs, nor is there any associated baseline research that can be drawn upon. Consequently, the volunteering impact may be slightly over estimated.

### **Infrastructure, Investment and Resource Issues**

The issues concerning the restructuring of local government were highlighted by most council-run museums, with respondents being concerned about the associated uncertainties on where museums services would be positioned within the new structures, the impact upon funding and staffing levels.

Worries on future funding were preeminent concerns amongst the independent museums, with reducing support from government (an especial issue for the Regimental museums and those heavily reliant on funding associated with the Decade of Centenaries commemorations), an endowment not generating adequate returns to sustain the current level of activity in the medium term and the need to generate new sources of income being to the fore.

Other issues relating to infrastructure and resources included difficulties in accessing the museum through public transport, the need to invest in visitor services and in maintaining historic buildings, and a reliance on part-time and volunteer staff to deliver services.

# Collections Development, Care, Management and Use

## Collections Development and Use

In 2007 NIMC published the *Survey of Museum Collections in Northern Ireland*<sup>11</sup>. This set out to establish; the types of collections held at each museum, the number of objects according to the type of collection, the significance of the collections, and the standards attained across the different areas of collections management and care. This report provided the baseline for the 2011 review of the sector and as such is a reference point for this survey. The profile of the collections at local museums was judged not to have changed significantly and thus neither the 2011 or 2015 surveys asked for information on the numbers of objects in collections.

It is a prerequisite that all Accredited museums have an agreed collections development policy that must reflect the nature of the museum and provide a clear statement of the governing body's intentions in developing (acquiring and disposing) their collections. Given the significant change in the governance structures of the council-run museums, it is anticipated that their policies will be reviewed during 2017-18.

The following table sets out the information provided across various collections development areas in 2015, and in 2011 by way of comparison.

	Council-run Museums		Independent Museums	
	2011	2015	2011	2015
Spend on Acquisition of objects and artefacts	£31,195	£45,682	£37,075	£24,997
Spend on Conservation of collections	£48,644	£64,473	£77,011	£226,380
Number of objects on loan <u>from</u> other institutions or from private collections	799	765	3,410	1,127
Number of objects on loan <u>to</u> other institutions	179	269	5	120
Number of temporary exhibitions curated 'in house'	No data available	64	No data available	29
Number of temporary exhibitions 'brought in'	No data available	34	No data available	2
Number of publications produced or contributed to by staff and volunteers	49	162	35	56

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.nimc.co.uk/research-and-publications/> accessed August 2016

Three points need to be taken into consideration in relation to the information above;

- The 2015 spend on conservation at independent museums includes expenditure of £168,357 at one museum in relation to a particular externally funded project.
- The 2011 figure of 3,410 for loans into independent museums includes a single loan of some 3,000 object from a private collection. From further enquiries it is understood that this loan remains in place, but was not declared in the 2015 return.
- The 2015 declaration of 162 publications originating from council-run museums includes 108 from one museum.

The last five years, therefore, have seen;

- Notable increases in expenditure on acquisitions and conservation, although the amount spent on conservation across the independent museums was inflated by a particular project at one museum
- A distinct contrast between the slight fall in loans coming into council-run museums and the 21% increase in such loans to independent museums.
- An increase in the number of loans local museums made to other institutions
- A significant increase in the number of publications issues by the sector.
- 93 temporary exhibitions being generated within the sector during 2014-15, with a further 36 such exhibitions being hosted across the 39 museums over the same period.

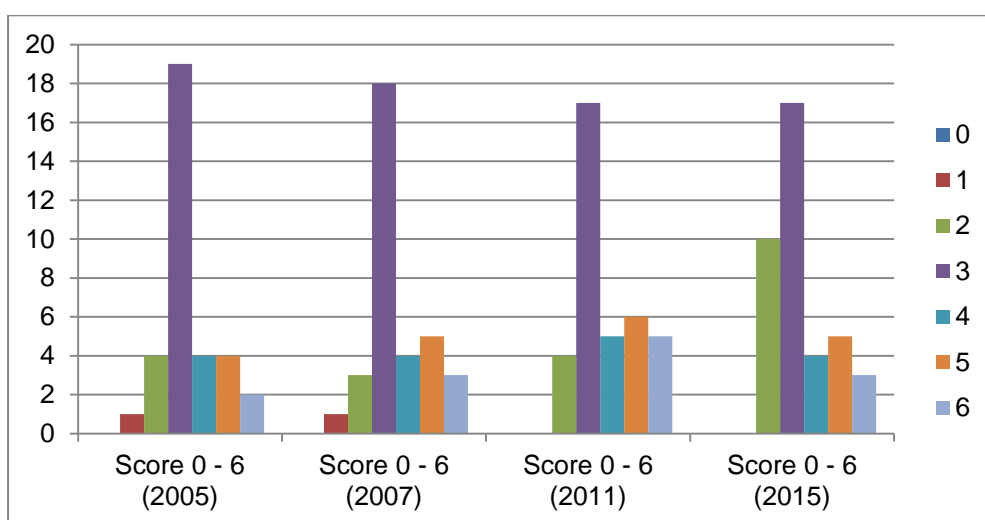
## Collections Care and Management

### Museum Environment

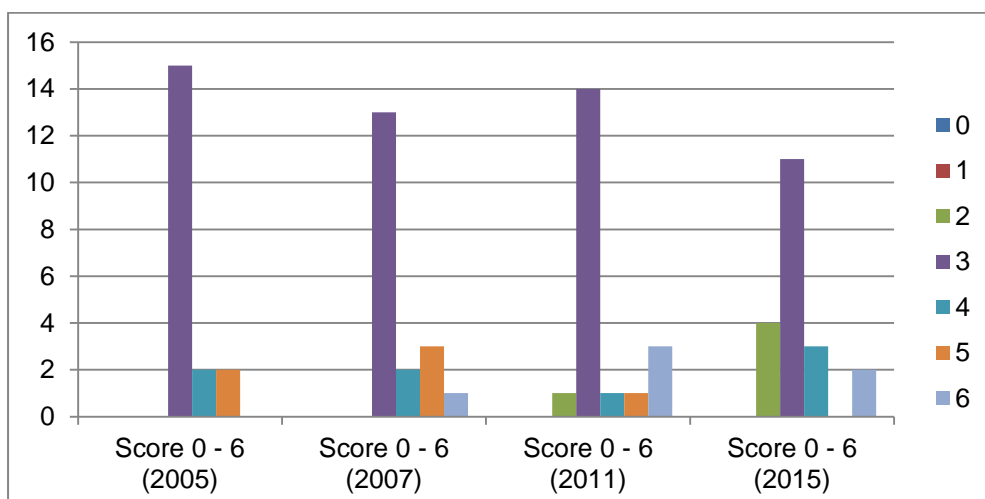
Maintaining the appropriate environmental conditions within museums is a primary means of protecting and preserving collections while on display or in storage. Given the individual nature of museum buildings and the specific requirements of the types of objects in collections, museums develop and maintain bespoke procedures for monitoring and regulating their environment. Nevertheless, museums are expected to monitor those common factors which might cause deterioration in the condition of objects, particularly temperature, humidity, lux and ultraviolet light levels, and to take steps to control the environmental conditions in which collections are held.

Level	Range Statement
0	No awareness of the preservation of collections
1	Awareness of preservation of collections as a basic function of museums
2	Basic knowledge of the environmental factors that can damage museum objects (e.g. light, moisture) Monitoring of some of these factors/occasional monitoring Measures taken to prevent severe damage
3	Basic understanding of museum environmental issues Basic monitoring and recording of relative humidity, temperature, lux and UV levels Monitoring equipment stored and calibrated appropriately Simple measures taken to control environment
4	As above, plus: Continuous monitoring devices used in parts of the museum Data recorded with associated information e.g. outside weather conditions

	Control maintained 50% of the time Conditions required for specialist collections identified
5	Full monitoring programme for stores and galleries Records regularly interpreted Control maintained 75% of the time Conditions required for specialist collections 75% complete
6	Monitoring programme has planned reviews and upgrades e.g. use of pollutant monitors Data informs planning and budgets Control maintained 90% of the time Conditions required for specialist collections 90% complete Assessment of potential pollution risks and spot checks

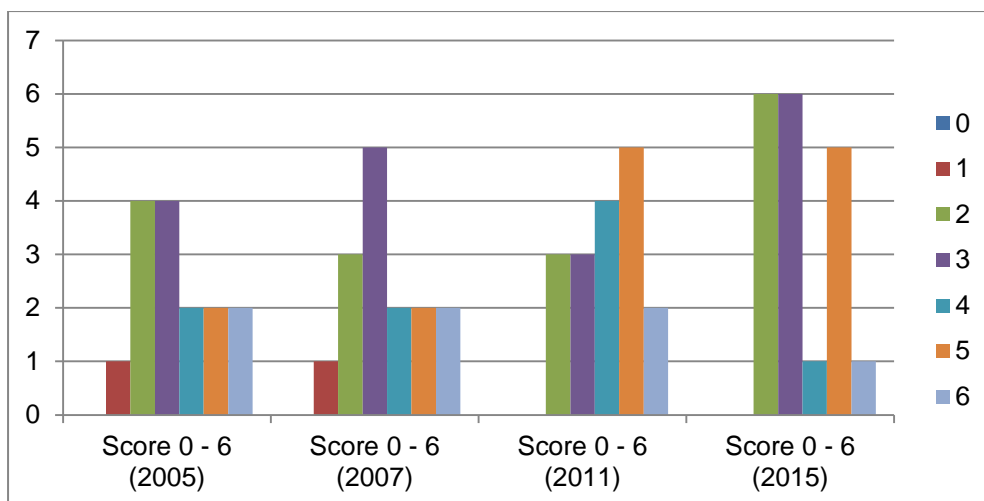


#### Environment Scores – Local Museums



#### Environment Scores – Council-run Museums





### Environment Scores – Independent Museums

Amongst the findings concerning museums environment are:

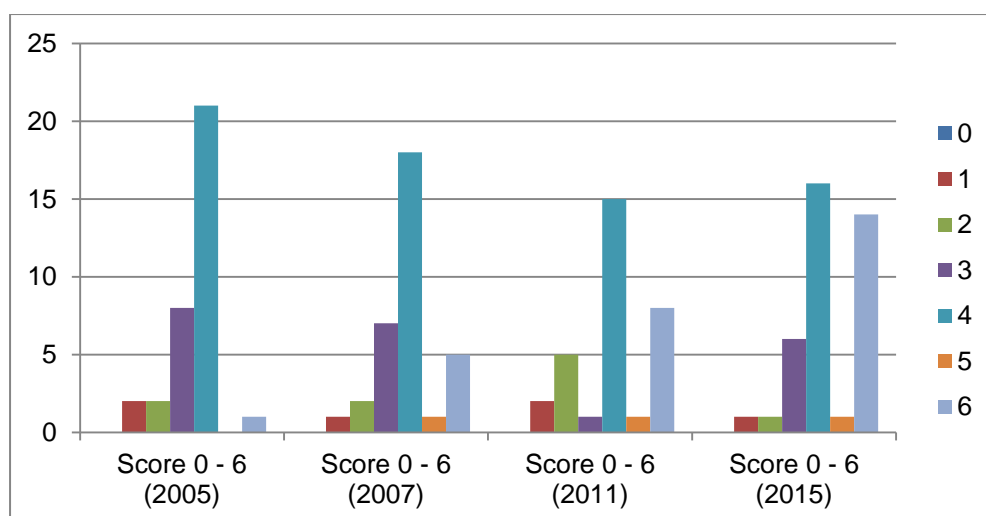
- The mean scores for local museums moved from 3.4 (2005), to 3.5 (2007) to 3.75 (2011) and now stands at 3.3 (2015). This suggests that there has been a notable decline in standards relating to museum environment since the last survey.
- All museums still indicate that their staff have a basic knowledge of the environmental factors that can damage museum objects; this has remained in line with the 2011 survey.
- 36 of the respondent museum indicated that they have systems in place to control the environment, with 31 museums able to maintain a stable environment at least half of the time.
- 53% (67% in 2011, 50% in 2005) of local museums monitor temperature and humidity continuously.
- 15% of local museums (27% in 2011, and 18% in 2005) continuously monitor light levels, with 10% (21% in 2011, 3% in 2005) monitoring UV levels.
- 69% (70% in 2011, 73% in 2005) of local museums assess potential pollution risks and carry out spot checks; eight museums (7 in 2011, 12 in 2005) do so on a regular basis and 19 (19 in 2011, 25 in 2005) do so on an occasional basis.
- 15 out of 39 local museums now hold specialist collections requiring particular environmental controls, compared with 17 out of 37 in 2011, and 4 out of 34 in 2005.

The responses from museums highlight four areas where with particular interventions improvements could be achieved. These are, ensuring that environmental data is recorded in association with other conditions, making sure that the records on the museum environment are interpreted regularly, extending the monitoring programmes to cover all galleries and stores, and moving to incorporate planned reviews and upgrades into a museum's monitoring programme. In addition, some independent museums require continuous monitoring devices for parts of their buildings and three require support in the basic monitoring and recording of the museum environment.

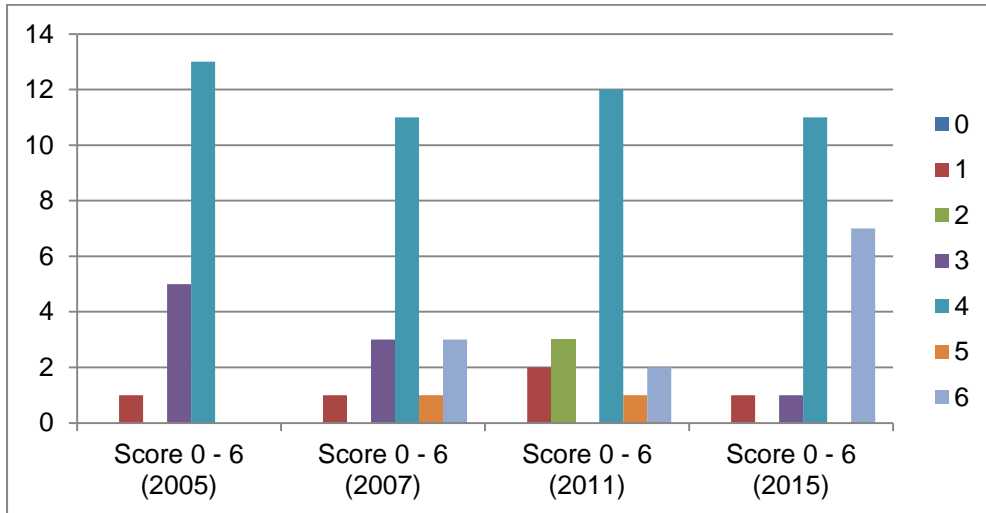
### Housekeeping

Housekeeping is the generic term for the care, handling, cleaning and the means by which collections are kept free of pest infestation. Good housekeeping routines are a fundamental means of protecting and preserving collections, and it is important that potential threats are monitored on a regular basis.

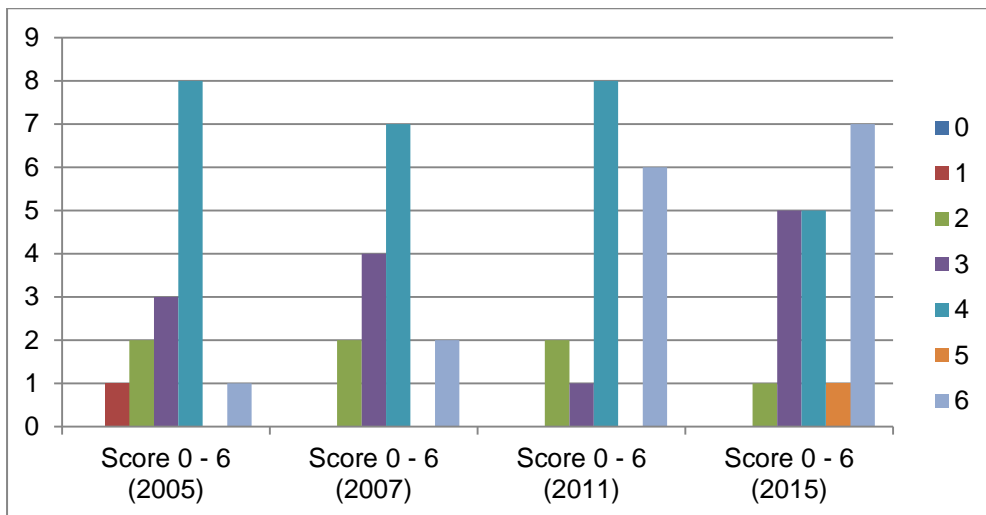
Level	Range Statement
0	No cleaning of spaces or objects undertaken
1	Some cleaning of spaces or objects
2	Regular cleaning, primarily of public spaces Occasional inspection for well-known pests eg woodworm Some understanding of handling objects
3	Regular cleaning, including dead spaces Appropriate cleaning of objects Knowledge of museum pests and how to spot their presence Objects entering the building inspected for any signs of infestation Staff trained in object handling
4	Regular cleaning programme includes museum stores Staff trained in basic object cleaning following specialist advice from a conservator Member of staff has responsibility for pest monitoring programme Conditions required for specialist collections identified
5	Integrated cleaning/care programme Objects requiring specialist care when being handled or moved are physically identified (label, box etc.) Isolation area to house all items entering the building prior to investigation for pest infection
6	Integrated housekeeping and pest management programme Handling of objects undertaken in accordance with relevant MGC □ Care of Collections Standards where appropriate Annual building and service checks undertaken by trained staff, with specialist input where necessary



Housekeeping Scores – Local Museums



### Housekeeping Scores – Council-run Museums



### Housekeeping – Independent Museums

Amongst the findings concerning museums housekeeping are:

- The mean scores for local museums moved from 3.4 (2005), to 3.8 (2007), to 4.32 (2011), and to 4.46 (2015) indicating a stepped improvement across the sector since the first survey.
- 92% (82% in 2011 and 2005) of museums have staff trained in basic object cleaning
- The number of museums with an integrated cleaning/care programme moved from 5 out of 34 local museums in 2005, to 19 out of 37 museums in 2011, to 24 out of 39 in 2015.
- With one exception, all local museums indicated that they had knowledge of pests and how to spot their presence, carried out occasional inspections for pests, and inspected objects as they entered the building. 25 of the 39 museums surveyed had an isolation area for items coming into the museum prior to pest inspection; this is an improvement since the last survey which saw only 17 of the 37 museums with an isolation area.
- 30 local museums or 77% (55% in 2011, 18% in 2005) have an integrated housekeeping and pest management programme.

- All museums (87% in 2011, 89% in 2005) have staff are trained in object handling and 82% (87% in 2011, 55% in 2005) routinely identify special handling requirements of objects.

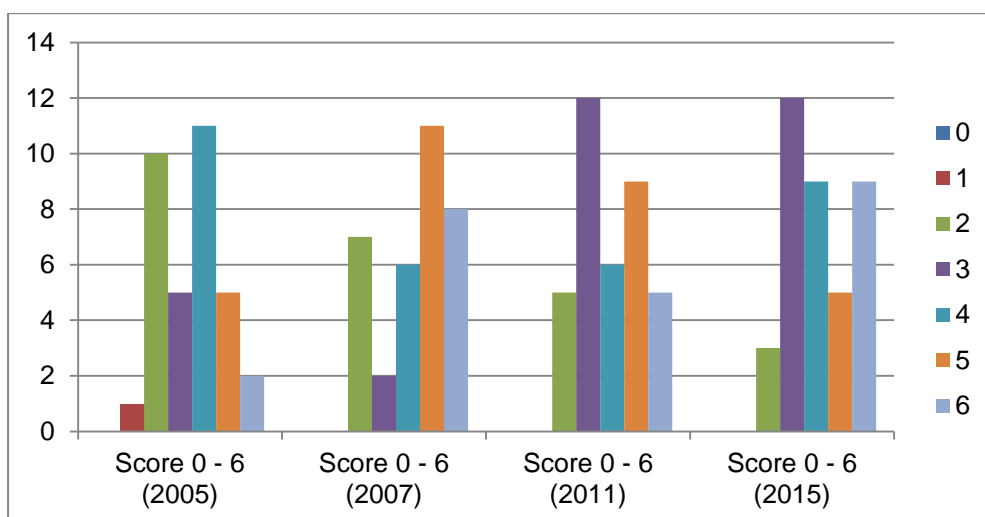
The critical areas where museums could improve their standards in housekeeping are, first and foremost, devising and implementing an integrated cleaning and care programme, and establishing an isolation area for all items entering the building prior to investigation for pest infection. Addressing these two aspects would significantly enhance housekeeping standards. Additionally, a small number of museums indicated that staff training in object cleaning following specialist advice was required, while others need to designate a member of staff to be responsible for pest monitoring.

### Storage

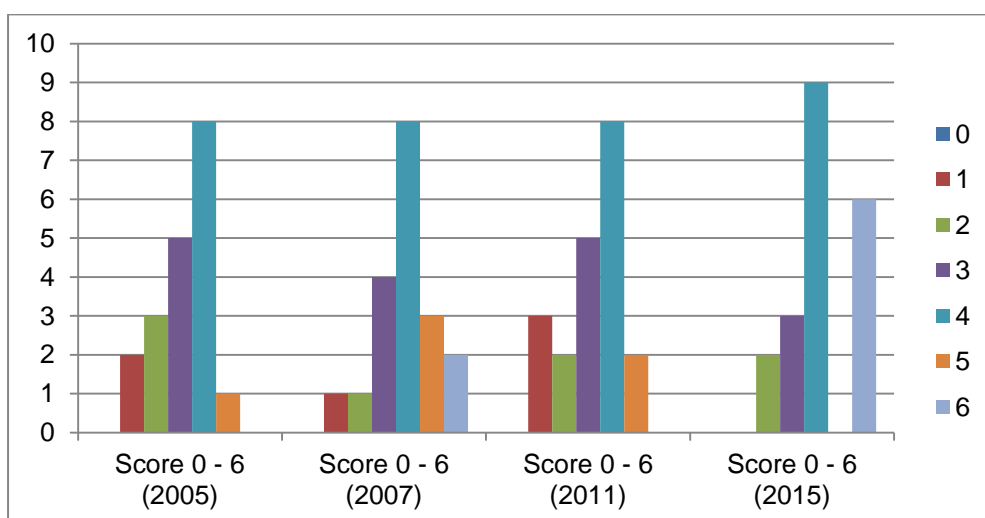
Storage areas in museums are, in the main, behind-the-scenes areas where collections are kept while not on display. There are two critical aspects to storing collections. The first is ensuring that there is sufficient space to accommodate the current collections and to allow the museum to collect across future years. The second relates to the conditions in which objects are stored, with a particular emphasis upon the use of suitable materials that meet the requirements of the collection.

Level	Range Statement
1	Recognition of the need to find long-term storage for objects not on display
2	Storage area identified e.g. room, cupboard Formal security if tenure for storage area Museum objects not stored with potentially damaging items eg cleaning materials Some use of boxes, racking etc. to avoid damage to objects Awareness of problems or hazards
3	Store organised (planned approach to physical layout & visual identification marks) allowing safe access to objects Conservation-grade packing for vulnerable objects Flat surface available to unpack items Simple environmental monitoring and control- eg daylight excluded, protection from dust Controlled access
4	As above, plus: Conservation-grade packing used throughout (& pallets for large objects) Store included in cleaning programme Regular/random condition/pest checks Study area (if present) under constant supervision Inert store furniture and materials, or inappropriate materials (eg chipboard) are sealed
5	As above, plus: Well-organised and maintained indoor storage sufficient for current collection Store location records and plan & well-marked boxes so that individual objects are easily retrievable Objects not stored on floors or in aisles Integrated housekeeping/collection care plan involving systematic condition

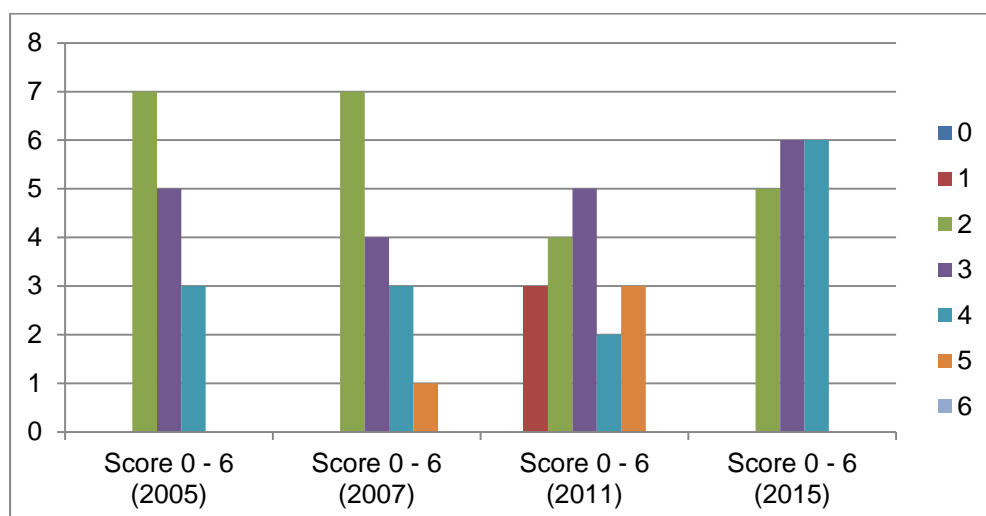
	<p>checks</p> <p>Member of staff has responsibility for store</p> <p>Adequate space for largest objects</p>
6	<p>As above, plus:</p> <p>Sufficient space for future acquisitions, at the current rate, for c. 15 years</p> <p>Materials used for store furniture and fitting out are inert (and have been tested)</p> <p>Programme of replacement of conservation packing materials where appropriate</p> <p>Separate study area</p> <p>Storage areas covered by collections care plan and systems eg monitoring, security, cleaning and disaster response</p> <p>Objects stored in accordance with Museum &amp; Galleries Commission Collections Standards where appropriate</p> <p>Provision for easy movement of large/heavy objects</p>



### Storage – Local Museums



## Storage – Council Run Museums



## Storage – Independent Museums

Amongst the findings concerning museums storage are:

- The mean scores for local museums moved from 3.0 (2005), to 3.4 (2007), to 4.0 (2011), and down to 3.7 in 2015 indicating a slight decrease in standards across the sector since the last survey.
- 95% of museums have an identified storage area. These percentages were the same in 2011 and 2005.
- In 2005 89% of museums had controlled access to their stores, in 2011 this had risen to 100% however by 2015 it had fallen to 87%
- 30 of the 39 (77%) of local museums now have store location records and well-marked boxes for the easy retrieval of objects, compared with 76% in 2011, and 68% in 2005.
- In 2005 39% of museums had all their objects off floors and out of the aisles in their stores, this percentage rose to 44% in 2011 and to 46% in 2015.
- 58% of museums stated that their stores were well-organised and sufficient for their current collection whereas only 44% stated this in 2005 and 2011.
- In 2005 84% of museums had over half their stored collections in boxes or on racks. By 2011, this figure had moved to 79% and in 2015 it had moved to 94%.
- 21 of the 39 (55%) museums indicated that more than 75% of their stored collections were in boxes or on racks compared with 44% in 2005.
- All museums in 2005 declared that they did not hold potentially damaging items (such as cleaning materials) within the collections stores. This figure fell to 92% in 2011 and stood at 95% in 2015.
- The percentage of museums using conservation grade packing materials throughout fell from 87% in 2005 to 63% in 2011, but then rose to 74% in 2015.

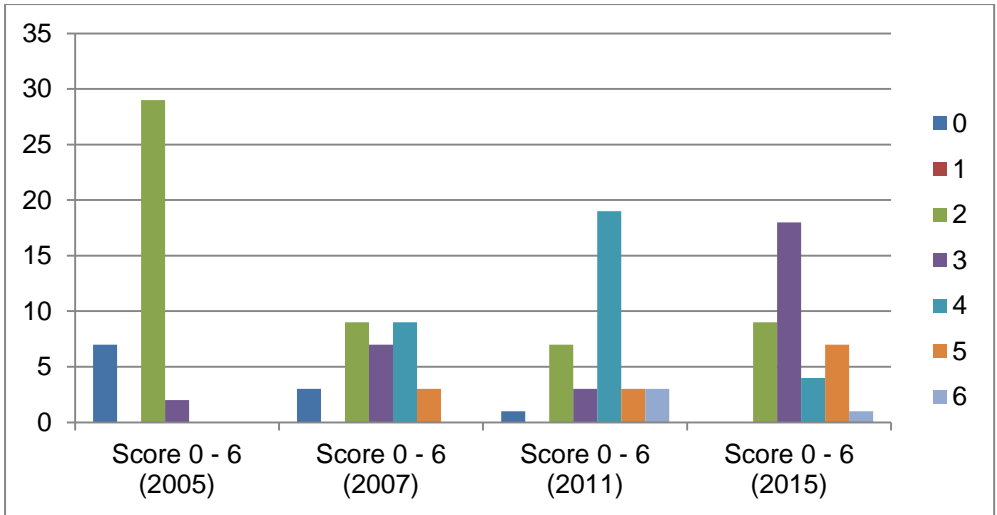
The 2015 returns from museums show a notable diversity of concerns around storage. Notable areas for improvement for more than six museums are; ensuring objects are not stored on floors or in aisles, and using conservation-grade packing throughout. However, nine other points listed in the range statement were not being met by museums, suggesting that issues around the storage of collections are particularly site specific, with solutions needing to be found at each museum rather than through a sector-wide initiative.

### Documentation

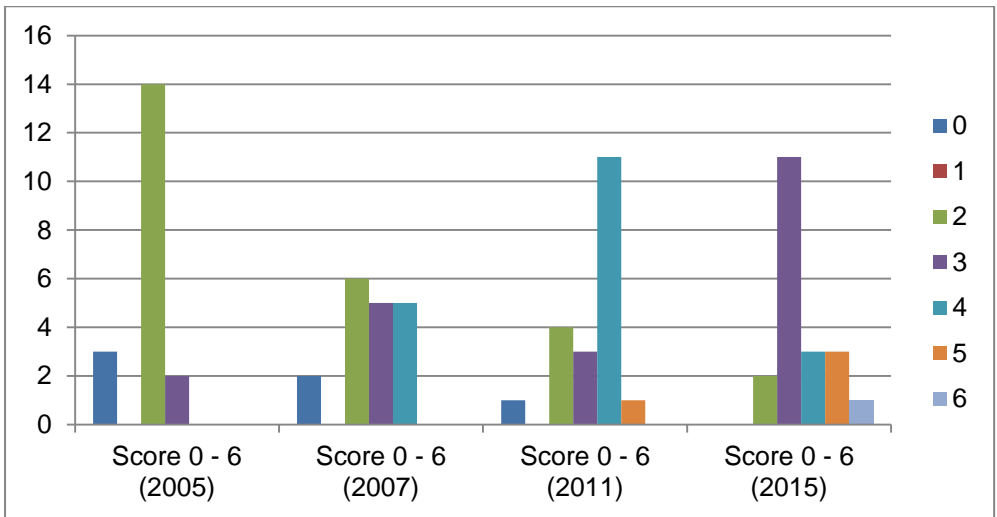
Documentation is the collection and management of the information and data on the objects within a museum's collection. The SPECTRUM procedures are the recognised industry standard for documentation covering the gathering, recording and storage of supplementary information about collections. The Museum Accreditation Scheme requires museums to have the primary SPECTRUM procedures in place in the form of a documentation procedural manual. The National Trust has developed and uses a documentation system called CATALYST, which is recognised for Accreditation purposes.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Range Statements</b>
0	No list of objects
1	Objects listed
2	Basic understanding of documentation (some SPECTRUM procedures in use eg marking & labelling, entry records) Awareness of major backlogs
3	Core SPECTRUM in use (requirements for Accreditation) Staff trained in SPECTRUM procedures Plan to address documentation backlog, with allocated budget and staff time
4	As above, plus: Documentation procedural manual New acquisitions records kept up to date Retrospective documentation at least 51% complete All provenance and process information (e.g. conservation) correlated to accession information Annual targets in documentation backlog plan are set
5	As above, plus: Documentation procedural manual forms part of the museums' collections management plan Materials and storage methods used for records are designed for long-term preservation Wide range of SPECTRUM in use Retrospective documentation at least 75% complete
6	As above, plus: All 20 SPECTRUM procedures followed where appropriate Full and complete documentation Documentation systems and software regularly reviewed, upgrading planned and budgeted

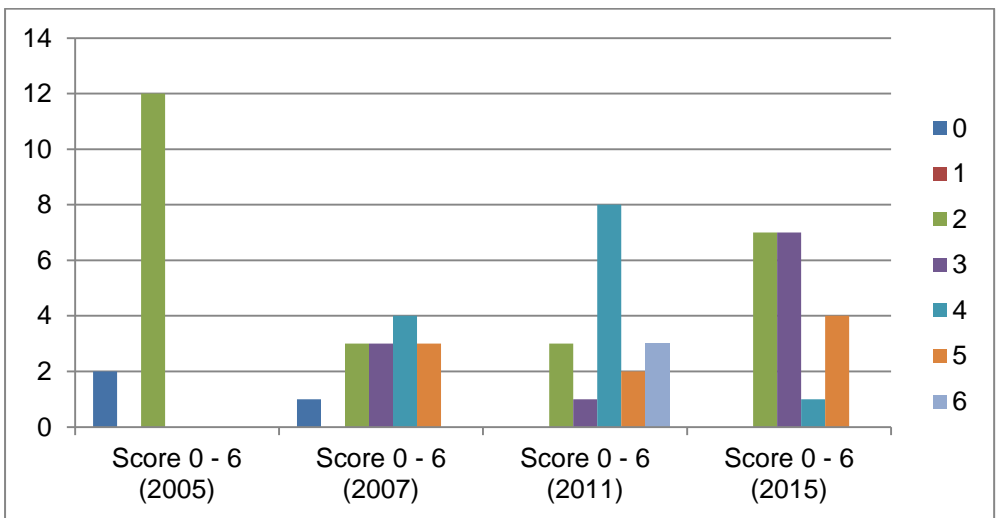
The following graphs show the scores attained across all local museums, as well as breakdowns according to the two governance types



Documentation – Local Museums



Documentation – Council-run Museums



Documentation – Independent Museums



Amongst the findings concerning museums documentation are:

- The mean scores for local museums moved from 1.7 (2005), to 2.8 (2007), to 4.56 (2011), and to 3.3 in 2015 indicating a decline in the sector since the previous survey.
- One museum declared that it was without a basic inventory of all of its objects (no change since 2011, albeit a different museum).
- 11 of the 39 museums indicated that their documentation was full and complete (down from 18 out 38 in 2011).
- In 2005 27% of local museums had 8 to 15 Spectrum procedures (or equivalent) in place; by 2011 this had risen to 68%. In 2015 76% of local museums declared that they operated in accordance with 8 to 15 (or more) Spectrum procedures
- 34 of the 39 local museums indicated that their staff have been trained in Spectrum procedures (or equivalent), compared with 32 out of 38 in 2011 and 12 in 2005.
- All 39 museums have a Documentation Procedures Manual in place which is an improvement from 87% in 2011 and 37% in 2005.
- In 2005 37% of museums had a documentation plan in place. By 2011 this figure had risen to 84%, but dropped to 74% in 2015. Of those museums with a plan, 62% have associated annual targets in place (down from 90% in 2011) 34% met these targets during the previous year (down from 44% in 2011). Eleven museums stated their documentation was 'full and complete' and would, in theory, therefore, have no need for a Documentation Plan. Nevertheless, 8 said they still had one.
- Documentation systems designed for long-term preservation are now in place at 95% of local museums in Northern Ireland, compared with 92% in 2011, and 76% in 2005.
- In relation to documentation backlogs, half (10 out of 20) of the council-run museums stated that they did not have a backlog in 2015, compared with 6 out of 20 in 2011. Amongst the independent museums, 8 out of 19 had a significant backlog on 2015, compared with 9 out of 19 in the 2011 survey.

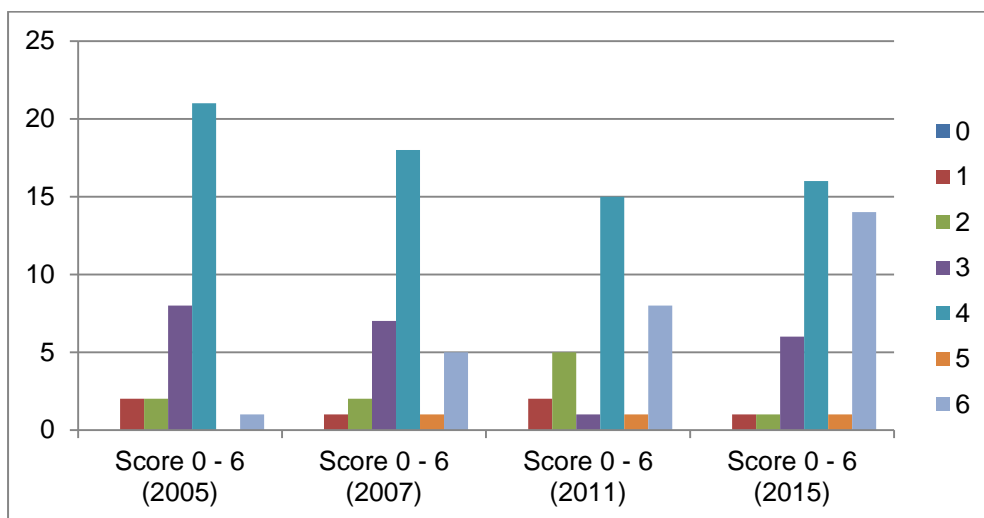
Three points are worthy of note regarding the current state of documentation in local museums. First, the survey indicates plainly that museums have two fundamental concerns – not meeting their annual targets concerning the documentation of their collections, and not keeping new acquisition records up to date. The second issue relates to four museums, which use the Spectrum standard, identifying that staff training in the procedures is required. And thirdly, while nearly half of the museums surveyed declared that each had a 'significant backlog' in their documentation, there is an array of interpretations of the term 'significant', ranging from one museum declaring that it had no major backlog while estimating it at 10%, to another indicating that it did have a significant backlog, estimated at 5%.

#### Security and Risk Assessment

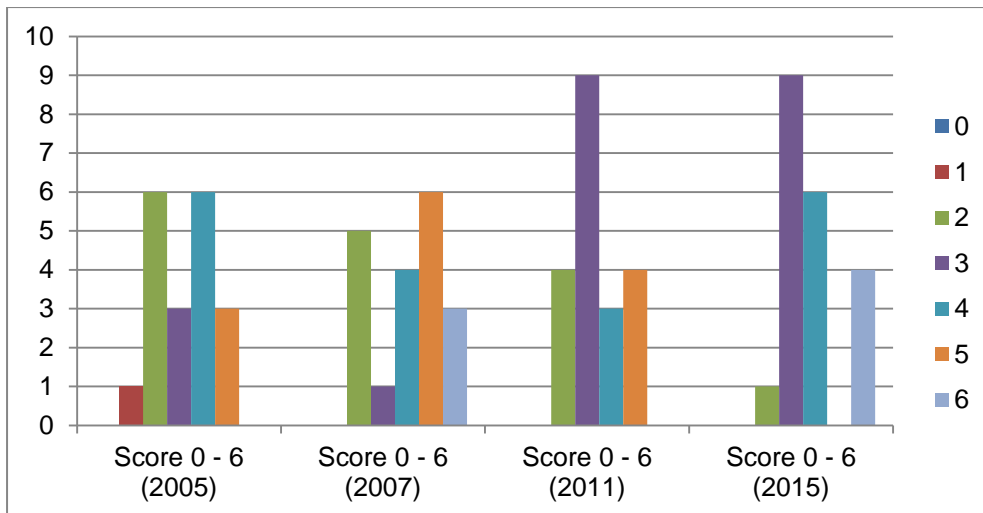
A museum is duty bound to provide a secure environment for the collections, for its staff and its visitors, balancing the need to protect objects in its care while enabling the public to access the collections as far as possible. As well as putting appropriate physical measures in place, a security programme should assess the risks of potential disasters and emergencies (for visitors, staff, buildings and collections), incorporate a building maintenance programme, and a plan to deal with a variety of emergency situations.

<b>Level</b>	<b>Range Statement</b>
0	No security measures in place
1	Very basic security measures in place

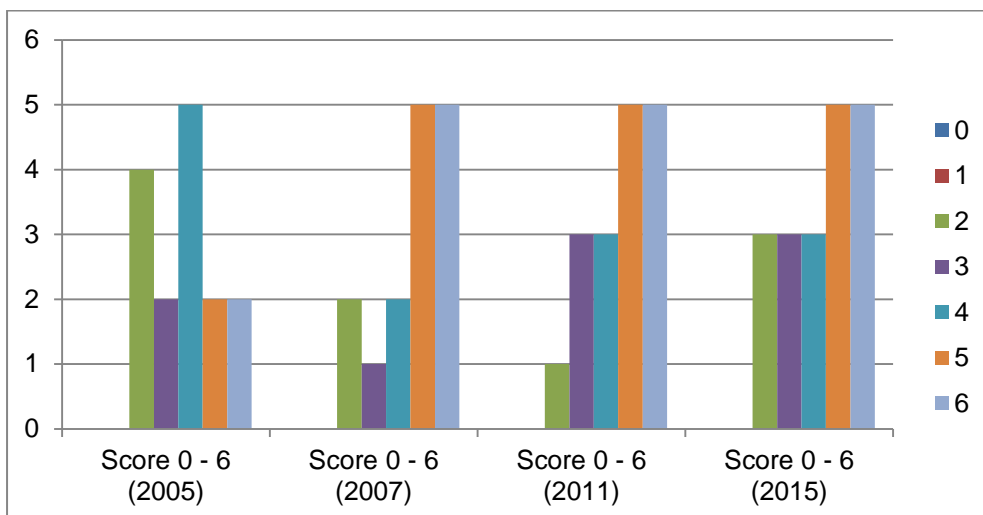
2	Doors and windows locked and secured Obvious security risks addressed Some understanding of the need to identify risks to property, collections and personnel, and to assess their probability
3	As above, plus: Appropriate physical and alarm measures in place Internal risk assessment carried out The need for emergency planning identified within museum policy documents Emergency response phone list in place
4	As above, plus: Expert advice received on improvements to security Plan for improvements to security costed and timetabled Work in progress on Emergency Plan (some elements in place)
5	As above, plus: Emergency Plan in place Regular risk assessment carried out Improvements to security in progress, with budget
6	As above, plus: Emergency Plan reviewed annually Rehearsals carried out and regular training undertaken by all staff All security recommendations in place



Security – Local Museums



### Security – Council-run Museums



### Security – Independent Museums

Amongst the findings concerning museums security are:

- The mean scores for local museums moved from 3.5 (2005), to 4.1 (2007) to 4.9 (2011) to 4.07 (2015) indicating a decline in security standards across the sector since the 2011 survey.
- As reported in the previous surveys, all museums have basic security measures in place and have addressed the obvious security risks.
- 38 out of 39 museums have appropriate physical and alarm measures in place.
- 35 out of 39 museums declared that they had completed internal risk assessments. In 2011 37 of the 38 local museums had undertaken such assessments and in 2005 29 of the 34 local museums had done so.
- In 2005 only half of the museums surveys had an emergency plan in place. By 2015, 37 out of 39 local museums had a plan in place, this is an improvement from 2011, where 34 of the 38 local museums had a plan in place. Notably, 20 museums with an emergency plan had undertaken a rehearsal and associated training with staff in 2015, an improvement from the 11 from 2011.
- Four of the 39 local museums in 2015 indicated that they had not received expert advice on improvements to security within the last five years; this is an improvement

from the 8 noted in 2011. Notably 16 of the local museums in receipt of such advice stated that the necessary improvements had not been costed and timetabled.

The analysis above points to three areas which, when addressed will raise the standards for museum security. These are, having access to expert advice on security, the need to carry out risk assessments regularly, and most critically, planning security improvements and ensuring that these are costed and timetabled.

### **Collections Development, Care Management and Use Issues**

Museums taking part in the survey were asked to identify particular issues each faced regarding their collections. Two responses highlighted concerns around the conservation of items, six museums indicated that a lack of staff was proving a hindrance; none listed collections development issues, and the vast majority detailed unease around the current provision for collections care and management.

Twenty four of the 39 museums surveyed pointed to deficiencies in their storage; it was either insufficient for current and projected acquisitions, or environmentally unstable, with three museums indicating that their stores were not seen as fit for purpose. Given that the range statement scoring points to a rise in the standards of museum storage, some further investigation on storage is required.

Just over a quarter of museums (11) identified environmental issues, with a similar proportion noting concerns on documentation. The majority of these were independent museums. Upon further examination it became evident that there were some independent museums that had robust standards in these areas, while others were comparably weak, suggesting that focused interventions at particular museums could address the decline in standards identified in environmental control and documentation.

## Education and Learning

By their very nature museums are didactic organisations, with this function being very much to the fore across Northern Ireland's local museums over the last ten years. Museum education and learning comes in various guises, commonly split between formal and informal learning. The former is seen the support given to the Northern Ireland Curriculum being delivered at museums and at other venues, such as schools. Local museums also provide a diverse range of informal learning events and activities also delivered on site and outside of the museum, with that undertaken away from the museum often forming part of an overall 'outreach' programme.

In other parts of the UK local authorities have a statutory remit for formal education, which allows councils to build close links between museums and education providers. This is not the case in Northern Ireland, where responsibility for curricular education remains with the Education Authority and the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment, and is outside the duties of the revised powers of the 11 new councils. And yet councils have invested heavily in terms of staff, resources and facilities to support their museums' educational activity. Similarly, over the last five years and more, many independent museums have moved to enhance their formal and informal learning offer.

### Learning Policy and Strategy

Following on from its *Learning within Museums in Northern Ireland* report of 2009<sup>12</sup>, NIMC advocated that museums move to adopt a learning policy, supported by a strategy for delivering the associated services.

Across the 38 museums surveyed in 2011, 21 had such a policy in place that had been agreed by the governing body, with eight of the 20 council-run museums having such a policy, compared with 13 of the independent museums. In 2015, 23 had a learning policy in place that had been agreed by the governing body – 11 council-run museums and 12 independent museums.

Half of the council-run museums (10) had a learning strategy in place in 2015, as did 10 out of 19 of the independent museums. However, the returns suggest that the differentiation between policy and strategy is not always apparent: 17 museums have both a learning policy and learning strategy in place, while 6 have a policy but no strategy, and three have a strategy but no policy.

It would appear that some further work is required by way of clarifying the scope and focus of learning policy and strategy documents, perhaps working towards a more standardised approach, as recommended in the 2009 report.

### Formal Learning

Formal learning is taken as the range of activities undertaken by a museum that aim to support the Northern Ireland curriculum, the associated Areas of Learning and Subject Strands as delivered across the pre-school and foundation stages, Key Stages 1 – 4 and post-16 stage. Such work is delivered at the museum, or at another venue.

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<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.nimc.co.uk/research-and-publications/> accessed August 2016

### Curriculum support delivered in museums

Museums were asked to provide an overview of the number of programmes each had provided at their venue across the seven curricular stages and to state the total attendance. The table which follows sets out the returns for 2015 and 2011, by way of comparison.

Stage	Council-run museums			Independent museums		
	No of programmes	Attendance		Number of programmes	Attendance	
	2015	2011	2015	2015	2011	2015
Pre-school	9	0	543	2	0	116
Foundation	15	250	851	9	522	2,926
Key Stage 1	44	1,163	2,844	26	9,418	9,323
Key Stage 2	84	10,478	14,136	28	5,075	7,557
Key Stage 3	33	2,637	4,029	13	170	354
Key Stage 4	12	1,019	703	10	0	63
Post 16	6	609	1,410	2	0	1,505
Not broken down by Stage	-	-	-	-	4,172	-
Totals	203	16,156	24,516	90	19,357	21,844

The number of on-site curriculum support programmes delivered by museums was not captured in 2011.

Thus in 2015, of the 39 local museums surveyed, 31 (18 Council-run and 13 independent) offered 293 learning programmes at their museums in support of the Northern Ireland Curriculum, which were attended by 46,360 children.

The table above also points to

- Museums recently consolidating their support for KS2 and KS3
- Museums widening their curricular support in the last five years to include the pre-school stage for the first time, with the independent museum sector initiating KS4 and post-16 programmes over the same period.
- The previous Mapping Trends report noted that three museums known to deliver significant programmes did not provide information on their education and learning programmes for 2011. When these are factored out of the 2015 returns, there remains a clear rise (in the order of 20%) in the number of school children visiting council-run museums to attend formal learning programmes, and a rise of nearly 10% at the independent museums.

### Curriculum support delivered at a venue other than the museum

The following table sets out the profile and attendances at curriculum support programmes delivered at locations away from museums.

	Council-run museums			Independent museums		
Stage	Number of outreach programmes	Total attendance		Number of outreach programmes	Total attendance	
	2015	2011	2015	2015	2011	2015
Pre-school	0		0	0		0
Foundation	4		381	1		200
Key Stage 1	15		1140	5		725
Key Stage 2	19		671	10		200
Key Stage 3	6		497	1		0
Key Stage 4	4		120	0		0
Post 16	13		375	0		0
Totals	57		3,760	3,184		18

In 2014-15 museums offered 76 learning programmes in support of the Northern Ireland Curriculum delivered outside the museum, which were attended by 4,309 children.

No data was captured in 2011 regarding the breakdown of such programmes according to Key Stage, but in terms of the overall number of beneficiaries, there has been a 15% drop in this type of service delivery by museums.

#### Published Learning Resources

Twenty nine museums (17 council-run and 12 independent museums) published learning resources during 2014-15. These included hard-copy resources for teachers and pupils such as worksheets, trails and packs, and on-line material (presented by 5 council-run and by 3 independent museums). Other support materials available included loan boxes, DVDs, and publications on the collections.

#### Booking System for Schools

The 2015 survey established that 17 of the 20 council-run museums and 13 of the 19 independent museums have a booking system for schools. In 2011 the figures were 15 and 11 respectively.

#### **Informal Learning**

Informal learning embraces the full range of events and activities organised by a museum, beyond the general museum visit. Such programming can take place at the museum or at another venue.

#### Events and activities delivered at museums

The table below sets out the returns made in respect of the informal learning events delivered by museums during 2014-15.

	Council-run museums		Independent museums	
Informal learners	Number of programmes	Total attendance	Number of programmes	Total attendance
Children	69	1168	22	16300
Adults	55	5107	23	10875
Older people aged 60+	32	1224	18	7310
Intergenerational	32	7935	16	3369
Family	46	7436	3	0
Other	1	460	6	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>23,330</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>37,854</b>

A total of 323 programmes targeted at informal learners were offered at museums with total attendance of 61,184.

No comparable data was captured previously.

#### Events and activities delivered at a venue other than the museum

	Council-run museums		Independent museums	
Informal learners	Number of programmes	Total attendance	Number of programmes	Total attendance
Children	30	185	20	380
Adults	36	1,406	16	151
Older people aged 60+	32	958	5	137
Intergenerational	27	150	12	2,032
Family	24	3,959	0	0
Other	1	260	10	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>6,918</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>2,700</b>

In 2014-15 museums delivered 213 events and activities outside their building targeted at informal learners, which were attended by 9,618.

No comparable data was captured previously.

#### **Education and Learning Attendances**

The attendances at education and learning activities at local museums across Northern Ireland during 2014-15 were as follows

	Council-run museums	Independent museums
Curriculum support at museums	24,516	21,844
Curriculum support outside of museums	3,184	1,125
Informal learning at museums	23,330	37,854
Informal learning outside of museums	6,918	2,700
<b>Totals</b>	<b>57,948</b>	<b>63,523</b>
<b>Combined total</b>	<b>121,471</b>	



## Partnerships

### Partners for developing and delivering Learning Programmes

Amongst the 19 independent museums, 6 indicated that they had active partnerships in place for the development and delivery of their learning programmes. These included collaborations with other museums (both local and national), with local councils around events such as Food Week and World Host, and with a range of statutory and education agencies including the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, libraries, the Education and Library Boards, BBC, and the universities.

A similar range of organisations were cited as partners by 13 of the 20 council-run museums. In addition these museums listed other council departments, local community organisations, historical societies, children's organisations, churches, local further education colleges and schools, the Alzheimer's Society, Open College Network, nursing homes and individual artists.

### Participation in National Events

The survey asked museums to indicate if they had participated in any national events during 2014-15 and the responses are summarised in the following table.

	<b>Council-run museums</b>	<b>Independent museums</b>
European Heritage Open Day	11	8
Craft Month	6	2
National Drawing Day	2	1
Science Week	2	1
Archaeology Month	2	0
Big Draw	2	0
National Poetry Day	1	1

Museums took part in various other national events including the Decade of Centenaries, World Book Day, St Patrick's Day and Holocaust Memorial Day, but also contributed to a wide range of local celebrations such as air shows, culture nights and festivals. It is notable that no local museums partook in International Museum Day or Museums at Night.

## Promotion and Evaluation

### Promotion of Programmes to Schools

The ways in which local museums promoted their schools' programmes was diverse. Nearly all chose to e-mail or direct mail schools, with two-thirds (20) also carrying associated information on their web sites. Other means of disseminating information included through Education and Library Boards (now the Education Authority), through the ni4Kids magazine, social media and phone calls. Word of mouth was also cited as a valuable promotional tool.

### Promotion of Informal Learning Programmes and Activities

No trend is evident in how museums promote such events and activities, with the sector using a wide range of media - websites, emails, flyers, word of mouth, familiarisation tours, social media, outreach events, mailing lists and local media (radio and press).

### Evaluation of Formal Learning Programmes for Schools

Across the independent museums, half of those offering curriculum support replied that they had not evaluated their school programmes. All but one council-run museum evaluated their

schools programmes. In the main evaluation forms were used to gather feedback from teachers and pupils, with one museum mentioning staff observation as an additional means of evaluation.

#### Evaluation of Informal Learning Programmes

A third of the 39 museums surveyed did not evaluate their informal learning programmes. Associated events and activities were evaluated and monitored through a variety of means, including; evaluation forms, comment cards and verbal feedback.

#### **Education and learning Issues**

The survey respondents identified four main issues around the delivery of education and learning services. They are;

- An identified lack of sufficient money and staff to develop this area of operations
- Insufficient facilities at museums to meet the demand
- The need to gain a better understanding of what teachers and schools need
- And, the inability to assist schools and other groups with the cost of transport and the other expenses associated with a museum visit.

## Audience Development

### Visitors

The number of visitors attending Northern Ireland's local museums has continued to rise since the related data started to be captured in the early 1990's. The following table gives an indication of number of people going to both types of local museum as reported through the Mapping Trends surveys undertaken to date.

	Council-run museums	Independent museums	Totals
2001	189,100	127,679	316,779
2006	225,615	205,265	430,880
2011	365,401	267,003	632,404
2015	402,841	234,111	636,952

These figures indicate that:

- Following the significant rise in attendances that occurred 2006 and 2011 (with the completion of a number of capital developments being identified as a major contributory factor), the <1% rise in the overall number of visitors since 2011 is notably modest.
- Over the last four years attendances at council-run museums rose by 10.1%
- While attendances at the independent museums went down by 14% over the same period
- Attendances at education and learning programmes at museums accounted for 17% of overall visits.

The most readily identifiable factor accounting for the increase in overall visitor numbers to council-run museums is the inclusion of Armagh County Museum, Limavady Museum and Museum at the Mill in the survey for the first time. These museums collectively attracted 40,903 visitors during 2014-15, offsetting the 9,883 declared in 2011 by the two council-run museums (Larne Museum and the Harbour Museum) not included in Museum Mapping 2016. Taking these changes into consideration, the underlying rise in attendances to council-run museums would seem to be closer to the small overall rise in attendances since 2011.

In a similar vein, the inclusion of Garvagh Museum, the Milford House Collection and the Northern Ireland War Memorial, with collective numbers attending of 12,783, is offset by the non-inclusion of the Naughton Gallery which had 21,065 visitors declared in the previous survey. However, this does not fully explain the drop in attendances at independent museums over the period, suggesting a small downward trend for that part of the sector.

### Outreach

The 2011 survey identified that the work undertaken by museum staff outside of their building or museum site, commonly called 'outreach', was gaining prominence in local museums' work. In 2015 such work, which included the formal and informal learning delivered outside of museums, together with attendance was quantified as follows;

	Council-run museums	Independent museums	Totals
2015	61,803	20,115	81,918

It should be noted that;

- 3 council-run museums did not deliver outreach programmes during 2014-15,
- 13 of the 20 independent museums surveyed did not undertake outreach work during 2014-15,
- during 2014-15, 39 local museums surveyed, benefitted 718,870 people – 87% of whom visited the museums and 13% profited from outreach activity.

## Recording Visitors and Users

### Visitors

In the 2011 Mapping Trends survey it was noted that the way visitor numbers were counted varied across the sector. It depended on whether or not there was an admission charge, the scale and layout of the museum site, staffing levels, and such like. Nevertheless there was a certain consistency in the methods used for counting visitors and this remained unchanged between 2006 and 2011, as indicated in the table below.

	Council-run museums		Independent museums	
	2006 and 2011	2015	2006 and 2011	2015
Manual count only	12	8	10	8
Electronic count only	5	5	4	6
Combination of manual and electronic counting	3	6	3	5

The latest survey suggests that since 2011 there has been a move away from relying upon the manual counting of visitors alone, with more museums now using some form of electronic count, which includes break beams, ticketing and membership card scanning, either as the single means of calculating numbers, or in combination with manual counts.

### Users

While the term ‘visitor’ is usually refers someone who goes to a museum building, ‘user’ may be applied to anyone else who benefits from interacting with services provided by a museum. Thus those who participate in museums’ outreach programmes may be said to be ‘users’. Yet the term may be extended to include people who engage with museums virtually or digitally, through the internet, social media, and the like.

In 2011 only nine museums (6 council-run and 3 independent) indicated that they measured the number of visits to their websites, with 2 museums able to state the numbers of unique visitors to the sites. At that time 4 council-run museums and 11 independent museums had a social media presence.

By 2015, 13 of the 19 independent museums were monitoring website usage, yet 13 of the 20 council-run museums were not in a position to provide information on the numbers of ‘hits’ or ‘unique visitors’. The use of social media has increased notable since 2011, with 33 of the 39 museums surveyed using Facebook, six using Twitter, a couple citing Tripadvisor and one museum indicating that it also used Flickr and Youtube.

The declaration of figures concerning social media and website usage was not complete or consistent, and thus no reliable estimate of the number of people engaging with the local museums can be made.

## Visitor Profiles

As part of the survey, museums were asked to provide information on the profile of their visitors. Each museum was asked to indicate if attendees were 'repeat' visitors, non-local day trippers, or non-local and staying overnight. The following tables present the number of museums estimating the percentage of visitors under the three categories. The returns from the last survey are presented by way of comparison.

Council-run Museums	Repeat Visitors		Non-local day trippers		Non-local staying overnight	
	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015
Not known	8	8	7	8	10	9
<10%	0	1	1	1	2	6
10 – 20%	4	1	5	4	3	3
21 – 30%	1	2	3	3	2	2
31 – 40%	1	2	2	0	3	0
41 – 50%	1	1	1	4	0	0
51 – 60%	3	1	0	0	0	0
61 – 70%	0	3	1	0	0	0
>70%	2	1	0	0	0	0

Independent Museums	Repeat Visitors		Non-local day trippers		Non-local staying overnight	
	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015
Not known	7	6	6	6	8	5
<10%	0	0	1	1	2	1
10 – 20%	6	3	3	2	4	6
21 – 30%	0	1	1	4	1	3
31 – 40%	1	1	1	4	0	3
41 – 50%	1	1	0	1	1	0
51 – 60%	0	2	1	0	0	0
61 – 70%	1	4	3	1	0	1
>70%	1	1	1	0	1	0

As with the 2011 survey, respondents were asked to indicate the methods used for calculating the percentages for the three categories of visitors. A quarter of Council-run museums stated that they relied on 'informed guess', with three-quarters drawing upon various data sources including surveys, questionnaires and visitor books. At the independent museums nearly half of respondents said that they 'guessed' the percentages; with the others drawing upon similar data sources.

Museums were also asked if they analysed their visitors by geography, by socio-economic status and by Section 75<sup>13</sup> groupings, with the returns set out in the table below. Through a comparison with the previous survey returns it shows that more museums are now undertaking visitor profiling along these lines.

	Council-run museums		Independent museums	
	2011	2015	2011	2015
Geography	8	12	8	9
Socio-economic	0	1	2	5
Section 75	1	0	0	1

Across the 39 museums surveyed, 11 independent museums and 7 council-run museums had completed a visitor survey during 2014-15. Of these, 4 independent museums and 4 council-run museums had undertaken research on the difficulties people had in accessing or visiting the museums. Amongst the difficulties identified were security issues (buzzer at door, for instance) and a lack of facilities such as a café or shop. Lack of public transport, and physical access and the layout of the building were also identified as barriers to access. Further difficulties identified were the lack of information about ‘what’s on’ at the museum site as well as the time constraints of the visitor.

The development of the capital infrastructure over the last ten years has led to considerable improvements to the services and facilities provided for museum visitors. In addition, recent legislation in the form of the Disability Discrimination Act, and the Section 75 duties set out in the Northern Ireland Act 1998 has placed particular responsibilities upon museums concerning customer care.

## Visitor Services

### Admissions policy

The 2015 survey indicates little change in admissions policies since 2011, and indeed since 2006, with a similar proportion of local museums (two-thirds, broadly) operating free admission. The profile of the local museums that do and do not charge is as follows;

- three out of the 20 council-run museums levy an admission fee,
- and, 13 of the 19 independent museums levy an admission fee.

### Opening Hours

The 2015 survey found that:

Across the 20 council-run museums;

- 17 are open during weekdays, although one is closed on Mondays (except bank holidays), and another is open on Thursday and Friday.
- 17 are open on Saturdays,
- Eight are open on Sundays, with a further two opening on Sundays during the summer period,
- One council-run museum is only open by appointment, when it does not present an exhibition

<sup>13</sup> Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 requires public authorities (including local councils), in carrying out their functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity and regard to the desirability of promoting good relations across a range of categories outlined in the Act.

- Three of the council-run museums operate seasonally (two being open six months in the year and one is open for five months).

In the independent museum sector;

- Ten of the 19 independent museums are open all the year round, with the other 9 operating seasonally, being open for between 3 and 9 months of the year,
- 16 are open on weekdays, with one museum not opening on Mondays,
- 12 are open on Saturdays,
- 10 independent museums are open on Sundays, with one museum opening at the weekend only and another open on weekends only during the winter months.,
- Two independent museums are not open at weekends.
- One museum is currently closed for redevelopment

In general terms the opening hours across the local museums have changed little over the last five years. But some subtle trends can be identified through comparing the information collected over the last ten years. For instance, amongst the council-run museums there has been a move towards enhanced weekend opening, with a slight increase in the number of such museums being open on a Sunday. Yet, amongst the independent museums, the number open regularly at weekends has seen a slight fall.

In the last five years, however, seasonal opening times have altered markedly. Three, (previous four) council-run museums now operate a seasonal timetable, with two of these extended the number of months they are open. By contrast, the number of months the seasonal independent museums are open has diminished. In 2011 these museums were open between 7 and 11 months a year, whereas now they operate seasonally between 3 and 9 months.

### Facilities

The following chart provides an overview of the facilities provided at all local museums in 2015, and as declared in 2011 by way of comparison. It should be noted that 39 museums were surveyed in 2015, while 37 took part in 2011.

<b>Brown signs<sup>14</sup></b>	2015	26
	2011	23
<b>External Signage</b>	2015	34
	2011	31
<b>Car park</b>	2015	38
	2011	32
<b>Disabled Parking</b>	2015	36
	2011	26
<b>Coach parking</b>	2015	38
	2011	31
<b>Reception desk</b>	2015	32
	2011	28
<b>Storage</b>	2015	19
	2011	21
<b>Toilets</b>	2015	37
	2011	30

<sup>14</sup> Brown road signs are used for tourist information. The white lettering on a brown background is internationally recognised as information for tourists and can often incorporate a symbol related to the destination that is signed – the M within a stylised temple indicating a museum.

Disabled toilets	2015	35
	2011	29
Changing facilities	2015	27
	2011	18
Shop	2015	20
	2011	20
Cafe	2015	15
	2011	18
Meeting room	2015	21
	2011	24
Education facilities	2015	20
	2011	21
Loop system	2015	14
	2011	17
Quiet Space	2015	13
	2011	No comparable data was captured
Guide dog provision	2015	32
	2011	No comparable data was captured
Special opening hours	2015	33
	2011	No comparable data was captured

From these returns it is evident that, in the main, the number of museums providing the listed visitor facilities has increased. There are however three notable exceptions, with a reduced number providing storage for pushchairs, mobility scooters, etc., fewer museums offering cafes, one fewer providing education facilities, and a notable reduction providing a loop system. Notable recent introductions have been the instigation of 'quiet spaces' and special opening hours, both with a view of accommodating people with specific needs.

### Interpretation

Three aspects of museum interpretation were surveyed both in 2011 and 2015, with the remainder only featuring in the latest survey. The findings are as follows, with 39 museums surveyed in 2015, and 37 in 2011.

Museum guide	2015	25
	2011	20
Audio description	2015	13
	2011	4
Languages other than English	2015	16
	2011	20
Text panels	2015	39
Visual panels	2015	31
Catalogue	2015	16
Trails for children	2015	21
Manual interactives	2015	20
Braille Labelling	2015	6
Activity sheets	2015	24



Guided tour - verbal	2015	38			
Guided tour - signed	2015	6			
Guided tour – Special needs	2015	31			
Touch tour	2015	9			
Handling sessions	2015	16			
Smell	2015	8			
Sound	2015	17			
App	2015	3			
Tablets	2015	8			
Pre-visit visual stories	2015	6			

An intention of the 2015 survey was to establish a base-line across the range of interpretative approaches. It is evident that local museums are using a broad range of techniques, often geared towards people's particular needs, and with a growing use of IT within exhibitions being indicated. One notable finding is the drop in the number of local museums now providing information and interpretation in languages other than English.

### Promotion and Marketing

The local museums use a variety of media to promote themselves and their events and activities. The following table offers an overview of the media used and how this compares with last survey. Not all museums indicated usage across all of the fields. Again, with 39 museums surveyed in 2015, and 37 in 2011.

	Used Regularly		Used Occasionally		Never Used	
	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015
Leaflet	32	32	3	6	0	1
Press editorial	21	-	11	-	0	-
Press advert	9	-	14	-	3	-
Local Press	-	25	-	12	-	2
Regional/National Press	-	9	-	24	-	5
Radio	7	7	20	12	9	9
TV	0	0	18	18	4	20
Poster	16	22	14	10	1	5
Billboard	1	4	8	8	8	25
Website	30	34	4	1	0	0
Social media	11	33	4	3	4	2
e-mail	0	28	13	8	0	0
Blog	-	4	-	4	-	29

No breakdown according to council-run and independent museums is offered as there was virtually no difference in the proportion of museums in each category that did not use the listed media, and those that used them regularly and occasionally.

The table above points to five notable features:

- The leaflet remains a consistent and valued means of promotion amongst local museums generally.
- The usage of television and radio has changed little over the last five years.
- Posters and billboards are used more now than previously, although most museums continue not to use billboards.
- The use of websites, highlighted as a significant addition to the promotional arsenal in 2011, continues to be the preferred media, with 87% of local museums using this medium regularly
- While social media is being used regularly by three times as many museums as in 2011, very significant growth has occurred in the use of e-mail over the last five years.

### **Audience Development Issues**

The 2015 survey highlighted a range of issues faced by local museums. While the importance and value of visitor intelligence and marketing was recognised, there was a lack of capacity, in both time and staff, to undertake more promotional and audience development activity. For the independent museums this was linked with a wide-spread dependence on volunteers and the lack of the support infrastructure often available to council-run museums. Allied to this were the issues of resourcing the identified need to invest in their digital infrastructure and to do more visitor surveys and profiling. Only one museum, however, saw the standard of its physical visitor facilities (in particular the toilets) as a significant issue. Virtually all of the museums with a rural setting identified issues around poor public transport links as matters of concern, with two museums reiterated that the cost of transport was proving a hindrance for visitors, particularly schools.

## Mapping Trends – Findings and Analysis

### Infrastructure, Investment and Resources

The restructuring of local government in Northern Ireland in 2014 has had a distinct impact upon how half of Northern Ireland's local museums are run, and included the disaggregation of the Armagh County Museum from National Museums Northern Ireland which has reverted back to local authority control after some 40 years. Previously 18 of the 26 local council operated a museum, but now nine of the 11 new councils are operating a consolidated museum service. This is seen as something which will ultimately strengthen the position of the sector; placing the council-run museums in a better position to deliver the 'citizen focused' services demanded through the duty to undertake community planning, and to make a notable contribution to the wider powers of the new councils. At this time, however, the change process within the new councils is still on-going, with management structures and service plans still to be consolidated and attendant uncertainties to be resolved.

With an emphasis amongst the councils upon delivering services through partnerships, the independent museums too have an opportunity to consolidate their contribution to local cultural and tourism strategies, and the like. But bigger councils with bigger departments may also mean less 'agenda time' for museums and thus a particular challenge will be to raise the awareness of the potential of museums' contributions.

The Museum Accreditation Scheme remains the bedrock upon which Northern Ireland's local museums continue to operate, setting the national standards for the sector. Meeting these standards provides a significant assurance to the public, to funders and to governing bodies that museums are fulfilling their particular function of holding their collections in perpetuity for the benefit of this and future generations. The number of local museums meeting these standards has changed slightly since the last survey, but the upward trend in the number of museums seeking recognition under the scheme continues. NIMC continues to receive expressions of interest in Museum Accreditation, particularly from organisations operating museums independent of government.

The 2011 survey stated that "there are relatively few new [capital] proposals coming forward", this following a period of quite intense museum building development since 2001. Running counter to that finding, the 2015 survey identifies some significant capital developments recently completed or initiated; six at council-run museums and five at independent museums, including the major restoration and conservation project undertaken by the National Trust at Mount Stewart. So it would seem that the intensity of museum development identified since 2001 continues. Indeed, it seems set to continue to 2020 and beyond with 11 of the 19 independent museums and 8 of the 20 council-run museums detailing specific developments planned for the near future.

The continued investment in the infrastructure is paralleled with a rise in the human resource across the sector. While the survey shows a continued upward trend in the number of people employed in local museums, it is notable that there has been a shift in how they are employed. More staff are now on part-time, temporary and seasonal contracts than ever before. This is likely a reflection of contemporary working practices. But of particular note has been the very steep rise (the number nearly trebling) over the last five years in the number of volunteers giving their services to local museums. This continues the trend markedly apparent in 2011.

That said, when asked what concerns they faced regarding infrastructure and resources many independent museums cited 'lack of staff' and a need to 'improve visitor services' as particular issues. In addition, nearly all such museums pointed to an uncertainty on the security of future funding (particularly from central government) and the continual challenge

of income generation to meet operating costs. More than half of the council-run museums expressed concern about the current lack of clarity within council structures and the associated implications for museums, with many anticipating budget reductions in the near future. A third of these museums indicated issues running counter to their desire to expand visitor services, with many highlighting the uncertainty around what performance measures and impacts they would be asked to meet by the new councils.

As an initial step towards gaining an overview on economic impacts of the sector, NIMC incorporated a series of questions into the 2015 survey. Consideration of the value and impact of culture generally and museums in particular gained notable traction over the last five years, with the former Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly undertaking an inquiry into arts funding<sup>15</sup> and examining the value and impacts of museums<sup>16</sup>, for example. The latter report highlighted that the last occasion when research was undertaken on the economic impact of museums was in 2003, when the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Northern Ireland Museums Council commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers to undertake a study, the results of which were published under the title *'An Initial Review of the Economic Impact of Museums in Northern Ireland'*. This study, which surveyed both national museums and local museums, concluded that the sector accounted for around £16.8 million of expenditure annually and that it directly employed 540 FTE jobs, of which 183 were at local museums and 23 related to volunteer time. It also estimated that the total number of visitors annually to Northern Ireland's museums was in the order of 801,000. By extrapolation, it estimated local museum attendances at 317,000 of which 60,200 were estimated as being from outside the region.

Since then various 'toolkits' have been devised to assist in calculating such impacts and NIMC has drawn upon these to establish a baseline of impacts relating to tourism, employment, goods and services and volunteering. While it can be demonstrated that local museums levered some £9,000,000 in tourism spend during 2014-15, fostered 478 FTE jobs and catalysed £855,000 worth of volunteer input (equivalent to 63 FTE), the processes of capturing the associated data require further refinement.

#### Collections Development, Care, Management and Use

As stated above, standards continue to be a vital touchstone for museums and none more so in relation to how museums look after their collections. It is therefore concerning to see that standards have fallen, for the first time, across three of the five areas of collections care and management.

As indicated in the associated section of the report, standards in environmental control, documentation and security have declined, while those relating to housekeeping and storage have risen slightly. On closer analysis it would seem that the issues around storage tend to be site-specific and it is likely that bespoke solutions will have to be found for the museums facing such associated pressures. On the other hand, the continuing problem of documentation backlogs could be addressed possibly through a sector-wide initiative, given the standardised procedures used. Some security improvements too are unique to museums, but an underlying issue for Northern Ireland's museums, in common with the rest of the UK, is the availability of security advice and expertise that is museum-focused. That said, there are certain steps which museums can take towards improving security, particularly around the strengthening of their approach to risk assessment.

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<sup>15</sup> See [http://archive.niassembly.gov.uk/culture/2007mandate/reports/report05\\_09\\_10r.htm](http://archive.niassembly.gov.uk/culture/2007mandate/reports/report05_09_10r.htm) Accessed July 2016

<sup>16</sup> See: <http://www.niassembly.gov.uk/globalassets/Documents/RaISe/Publications/2011/Culture-Arts-Leisure/2911.pdf> Accessed July 2016

The detailed analysis of the returns from individual museums suggests certain actions to be undertaken by NIMC around further training, the provision of grant assistance and designing targeted programmes in partnership with the sector, to address identified areas of need.

Nevertheless, with 60% of the museums surveyed pointing to deficiencies in their collections storage, and a quarter of museums having concerns around documentation, some areas will require a concerted and sector-wide approach involving the full range of funders and governing bodies.

Follow-up conversations with curators suggest that local museums continue to acquire objects, primarily through donation, and only moving to purchase items as and when they come on to the market (through auction or from private vendors). This reactive response also prevails for the conservation of objects. The tendency is to commission such work on objects that are to be included in an exhibition, with few museums operating a strategic, planned conservation programme. The survey points to two museums in this regard, namely the National Trust at Mount Stewart and the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland, which introduced broad collections conservation projects as part of their larger renovation and development programmes. While the sector is currently disposed towards adopting a reactive approach to collections development and conservation, driven primarily by budgetary considerations, this may be storing up problems for the future. NIMC is of the view that further investigation is needed on the scale of conservation requirement across local museum collections and how this might be addressed.

Loans from other institutions to local museums appear to have held steady since 2011, perhaps reflecting the long-term nature of such arrangements. But there has been a notable rise in the number of loans made by local museums, particularly from private lenders. Follow-on investigation suggests that such objects come with personal narratives that enhance the local dimension of exhibitions that in turn allows an easier engagement of the public with a diversity of narratives to be undertaken. In addition, curators reported that there was a growing aspiration amongst governing bodies to improve access to museum collections by making them available elsewhere through lending to other institutions.

While the number of publications issued by local museums has increased, further research is required regarding their type, form and intent, given that they are a primary means of visitor and user engagement.

### Education and Learning

From the information provided, it is clear that local museums continue to value the education and learning programmes they provide, with more museums than ever before now delivering such activity (31 in 2015, compared with 25 in 2011). The number of children attending the notably diverse range of programmes targeted at supporting the education curriculum, and delivered at the museums, has also risen since 2011. On the other hand, the formal learning sessions delivered outside of museums shows a 15% drop in attendances since the last survey. Subsequent conversations point to a lack of staff time to facilitate the demand for outreach work to be done in support of the curriculum and the main reason for this downturn. Indeed, the issues identified through the survey point to a constant frustration of not having the resources to hand to meet the education and learning demands generally being placed on museums.

The 2011 Mapping Trends clearly identified that informal learning and outreach activity was becoming a significant element of local museums' work, but it could not be quantified at that time. The returns for 2015 provide a picture of the scale of such activity for the first time, and

thus it appears that education and learning attendances represent around 17% of the total of museum visitors and beneficiaries.

With all but one of the council-run museums, and half of the independent museums, evaluating their formal learning offer, there is still room for improvement in how the qualitative aspect of their programmes is assessed. Yet, through discussions outside of the survey, local museums report that the feedback received from teachers and children on museums' work with schools is particularly good. So that while the beneficial outcomes are recognised, they are not being recorded in such a consistent manner as to allow impacts to be identified and reported more readily and robustly. The benefits of a more standardised approach, it might be argued, start with strong and standardised policies and strategies for the educational work in local museums.

It must be noted that when asked to identify any issues concerning the provision of education and learning services, all respondents began from the point of view of a common desire to develop and expand such services, pointing to an appetite and commitment to do more in an area where museums are having a significant and obvious impact. A challenge, therefore, for the governing bodies, NIMC and funders, will be to advocate for and secure the resources to unlock the full potential of museums to support formal and informal learning.

#### Audience Development

A review of the Museum Accreditation scheme revealed that museums needed develop their resilience through more effective forward planning, to balance aspects of collection management and to be responsive to user needs and expectations. As a consequence, new assessment criteria were introduced in 2011, which saw museums seeking recognition under the scheme having to present a more detailed analysis of their education and learning work and their audience development activity.

In view of this the 2015 Mapping Trends survey sought to gather information on visitor profiles and visitor services, together with the associated issues identified by the participating museums.

In short, the survey established that local museums received 636,952 visitors in 2015, representing a small rise on the visitor numbers declared in 2011, but continuing the upward trend in attendances seen over the last twenty and more years. There was, however, a marked drop in attendances to the independent museums since 2011.

As mentioned above, 'outreach' is a significant and growing aspect, now equating to 13% of the number of people benefiting the work undertaken by local museums.

In a similar vein, through their websites, social media and other digital means, museums are engaging with a broad base of 'users'. The returns suggest that there is further work is required by way of quantifying the digital engagement, in establishing the public's preferred methods of engagement and the reasons for doing so, and also in evaluating the impact and worth of this work.

Mapping Trends 2015 asked a series of questions on the profile of museum visitors, whether they were 'repeat' visitors, non-local day trippers, or non-local and staying overnight. The associated profiles show relatively little change since 2011. They did, however, point to a slight rise in the percentage of repeat visitors at both council-run and independent museums, and evidenced a marked rise at independent museums in the number of non-local day trippers and non-local visitors staying overnight. But the 'looseness' of the methodology used to calculate the percentages for the three categories of visitors needs to be highlighted, together with the fact that a third of museums were unable to provide related information.

Relatively few local museums analysed their visitors by geography, by socio-economic status and by Section 75 groupings, a position that is virtually unchanged since 2011. Given the critical value of visitor profiling to contemporary museum practice and in view of the fact that local museums lack the capacity to undertake consistent visitor surveys, NIMC commissioned AudiencesNI at the end of 2015 to deliver a visitor profiling project. This sought to capture visitor information on geographic, socio-economic and Section 75 profiles, to develop a visitor profiling methodology which can be used for future visitor profiling and benchmarking, and strengthen the capacity and skills among museum staff to carry out and analyse visitor profile surveys. The associated report was published during the summer of 2016, and the project has gone some way to addressing the issue of staff knowledge and capacity concerning audience development identified in the Mapping Trends survey.

Other associated issues identified by museum staff included inadequate marketing and promotional techniques, lack of an associated budget, poor signage, visitor service and accessibility issues, lack of control of social media and websites, inadequate budget, inadequate volunteer provision, a lack of strong identity, developing partnerships, competition with other venues, school transport, and poor capacity to reach younger audiences. Indeed, the range of issues identified marks communications, visitor research and audience development as area for major work to be done as a way of development the resilience and sustainability of local museums. That said, the survey shows that museums have strengthened their visitor services and facilities over the last five years.

There has been no change in the profile of local museums that levy and admission charge since 2006, with a small minority of council-run museums making such a charge and the majority of independent museums having an entry fee. Also, it is noticeable that there is a consistency in the opening hours, museums generally have moved to open more outside what are considered the 'working hours'. Yet it should be noted that since 2011 the length of time museums are open 'seasonally' has diminished.

# Appendix I

## Directory of museums included in Mapping Trends 2016

### Council-run Museums

#### **Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council**

Museum at the Mill

Tel: 028 9034 0129

<http://www.antrimandnewtownabbey.gov.uk/MuseumatTheMill>

Sentry Hill

Tel: 028 9034 0064

<http://www.sentryhill.net/>

#### **Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council**

Armagh County Museum

Tel: 028 3752 3070

[www.armagh.co.uk/armaghcountymuseum](http://www.armagh.co.uk/armaghcountymuseum)

Craigavon Museum Service and Barn Museum

Tel: 028 3831 1669

[www.facebook.com/CraigavonMuseumServices](http://www.facebook.com/CraigavonMuseumServices)

F. E. McWilliam Gallery and Studio

Tel: 028 4062 3322

[www.femcwilliam.com/Home.aspx](http://www.femcwilliam.com/Home.aspx)

#### **Ards and North Down Borough Council**

North Down Museum

Tel: 028 9127 8035

[www.northdownmuseum.com](http://www.northdownmuseum.com)

#### **Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council**

Ballycastle Museum

Tel: 028 7034 7234

[www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/see-do/cultural-services/museums-services/ballycastle-museum](http://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/see-do/cultural-services/museums-services/ballycastle-museum)

Ballymoney Museum

Tel: 028 2766 0245

[www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/see-do/cultural-services/museums-services/ballymoney-museum](http://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/see-do/cultural-services/museums-services/ballymoney-museum)



Coleraine Museum  
Tel: 028 7034 7213

[www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/see-do/cultural-services/museums-services/causeway-museum-services](http://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/see-do/cultural-services/museums-services/causeway-museum-services)

Green Lane Museum  
Tel: 028 7776 0650

[www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/see-do/cultural-services/museums-services/ballycastle-heritage-trail](http://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/see-do/cultural-services/museums-services/ballycastle-heritage-trail)  
[www.roevalleyarts.com](http://www.roevalleyarts.com)

Limavady Museum at Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre  
Tel: 028 7776 0650

[www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/see-do/cultural-services/museums-services/limavady-museum](http://www.causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk/see-do/cultural-services/museums-services/limavady-museum)  
[www.roevalleyarts.com](http://www.roevalleyarts.com)

### **Derry City and Strabane District Council**

Tower Museum  
Tel: 028 7137 6510

<http://www.derrystrabane.com/Subsites/Museums-and-Heritage/Tower-Museum>

### **Fermanagh and Omagh District Council**

Fermanagh County Museum  
Tel: 028 6632 5000

[www.enniskillencastle.co.uk](http://www.enniskillencastle.co.uk)

### **Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council**

Irish Linen Centre & Lisburn Museum  
Tel: 028 9266 3377

[www.lisburnmuseum.com](http://www.lisburnmuseum.com)

### **Mid and East Antrim Borough Council**

Andrew Jackson and US Rangers Centre  
Tel: 028 9335 8245

[www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk](http://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk)

Carrickfergus Museum  
Tel: 028 9335 8241

[www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk](http://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk)

Mid - Antrim Museum  
Tel: 028 2563 5028

[www.thebraid.com](http://www.thebraid.com)  
[www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk](http://www.midandeastantrim.gov.uk)

## **Newry, Mourne and Down District Council**

Down County Museum  
Tel: 028 4465218  
[www.downcountymuseum.com](http://www.downcountymuseum.com)

Newry & Mourne Museum  
Tel: 028 3031 3182  
[www.bagenalscastle.com](http://www.bagenalscastle.com)

### **Independent Museums**

Armagh Public Library  
Tel: 028 3752 3142  
<http://armaghpubliclibrary.arm.ac.uk/wp/>

Downpatrick Railway Museum  
Tel: 028 4461 5779  
[www.downrail.co.uk](http://www.downrail.co.uk)

Flame – The Gasworks Museum  
Tel: 028 9633 9575  
[www.flamegasworks.co.uk](http://www.flamegasworks.co.uk)

Garvagh Museum  
Tel: 028 2955 8544  
[www.garvaghmuseum.com](http://www.garvaghmuseum.com)

Inniskillings Museum  
Tel: 028 6632 3142  
[www.inniskillingsmuseum.com](http://www.inniskillingsmuseum.com)

Police Museum  
Tel: 028 9065 0222 ext 22499  
[www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/our-history/police-museum](http://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/our-history/police-museum)

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland  
Tel: 028 9337 3968  
[www.steamtrainsireland.com](http://www.steamtrainsireland.com)

Royal Irish Fusiliers Museum  
Tel: 028 3752 2911  
[www.armymuseums.org.uk/museums/0000000103-Royal-Irish-Fusiliers-Regimental-Museum.htm](http://www.armymuseums.org.uk/museums/0000000103-Royal-Irish-Fusiliers-Regimental-Museum.htm)

Royal Ulster Rifles Museum  
Tel: 028 9023 2086  
[www.armymuseums.org.uk/museums/0000000121-Royal-Ulster-Rifles-Museum.htm](http://www.armymuseums.org.uk/museums/0000000121-Royal-Ulster-Rifles-Museum.htm)

Somme Museum  
Tel: 028 9182 3202  
[www.sommeassociation.com/visit/somme-museum](http://www.sommeassociation.com/visit/somme-museum)

National Trust  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/days-out/northern-ireland](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/days-out/northern-ireland)

Address  
Tel: 028 8778 4753  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/address-house](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/address-house)

The Argory  
Tel: 028 8778 4753  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/the-argory](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/the-argory)

Castle Ward  
Tel: 028 4488 1204  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/castle-ward](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/castle-ward)

Florence Court  
Tel: 028 6634 8249  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/florence-court](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/florence-court)

Hezlett House  
Tel: 028 7084 8728  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/downhill-demesne-and-hezlett-house](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/downhill-demesne-and-hezlett-house)

Mount Stewart  
Tel: 028 4278 8387  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mount-stewart](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mount-stewart)

Springhill House  
Tel: 028 8674 7927  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk/springhill](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/springhill)

The Northern Ireland Museums Council is grateful for the co-operation of the listed museums in providing detailed information on their institutions and operations.

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