

Session 5

Accreditation

HPHE7009 Skills in the Museum

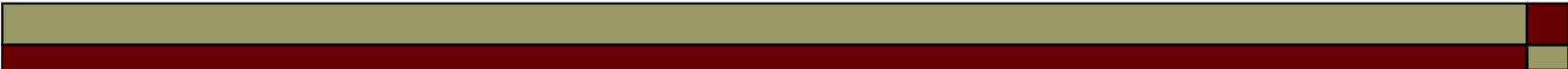
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About Museum Accreditation

- ❑ Museums / galleries are / shall be the fundamentals of communities
 - Need to be resilient, focussed and trusted organisations
 - offer great experiences
- ❑ Positive standard needs to be established / measured
- ❑ Developed Accreditation Standard linked to Spectrum (UK Collections Management standard) and Museum Association Code of Ethics measuring
 - Organisational health
 - Collections
 - Users and their experience





What is accreditation?

- “The Accreditation scheme sets out nationally-agreed standards of good practice and enables museums to assess their current performance, as well as supporting them to plan and develop their services.” Collections Trust
- “It tells everyone involved with a museum that they’re doing the right things to help people to engage with collections and protect them for the future.” Arts Council

Aims and benefits

- Gaining accreditation as endorsement
 - shows that organisation as professionally run, sustainable and trustworthy
- Achieving accreditation can help with:
 - Advocacy within your museum and governing body
 - Accountability by providing effective oversight
 - Assessment following Accreditation Panel feedback



Also followed by Welsh Government

- Despite some aspects of museum work are devolved (funding, legislatures, see also Manifesto for Museums in Wales), the accreditation is a UK wide standard

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GUIDANCE

Museum Accreditation Scheme: standard

The criteria museums and galleries must meet to achieve the Museums Accreditation Standard.

Part of: [Museum Accreditation Scheme and Museums](#)

First published: 1 November 2018

Last updated: 1 November 2018

Documents

 **Museum Accreditation Scheme: standard**

PDF 254 KB

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First published

Part of

Who developed it?

- There are four main partners:

Arts Council England

Welsh Government

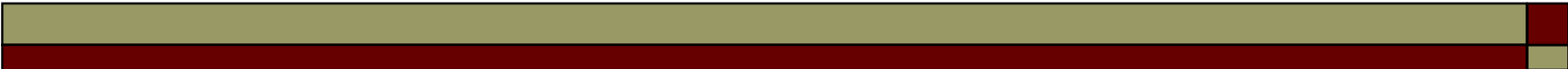
Museums Galleries Scotland
(MGS)

Northern Ireland Museums Council
(NIMC)



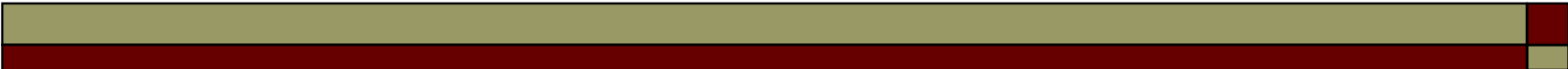
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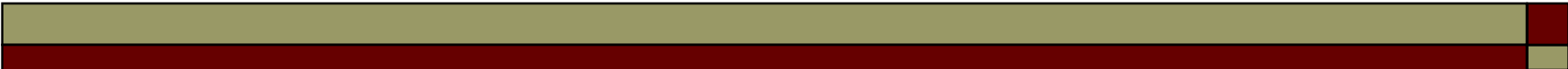
History

- ❑ Originally known as Museum Registration Scheme
- ❑ First introduced in 1988
- ❑ Renamed to become the Museum Accreditation Scheme 2004
- ❑ Since 2004, there have been 2 further editions, 2011 and 2018 following a large-scale review
- ❑ More than 1700 accredited museums UK wide by 09/24 (with more working toward accreditation



What is the scheme designed to do?

- ❑ Ensures that everyone involved with a museum, whether that be Trustees, staff, volunteers, or contractors, that they're doing the right and appropriate things to help people engage with collections as well as protect collections for the future.
- ❑ To make sure museums are governed appropriately.
- ❑ Designed for the smallest volunteer-run museums to national museums, though it's not a one-size-fits-all scheme.

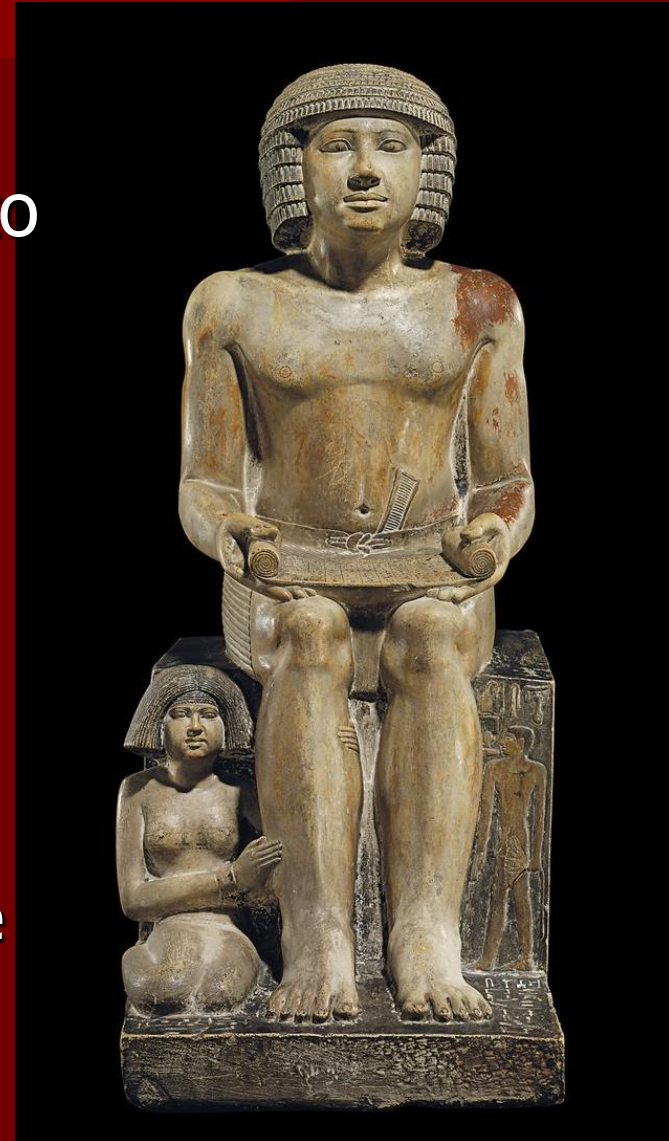


Simply put...

- ❑ Designed to encourage all museums and galleries to meet an agreed standard in:
 - how they are managed/run
 - how they manage their collections
 - how they engage with their users
- ❑ To ensure a shared, ethical way of operating for everyone involved in running a museum.

Case Study: Sale of Statue of Sekhemka, Northampton Museum & Art Gallery (MANAG) 2014

- banned from the Museums Association (MA) for 5 years due to
 - considered unethical (financially motivated + insufficient consultation)
 - jeopardized museum's accreditation status + ability to receive grant funding
 - encouraged illegal excavation / plundering Egyptian antiquities
 - The sale could have made the statue inaccessible to the public, students, and scholars.

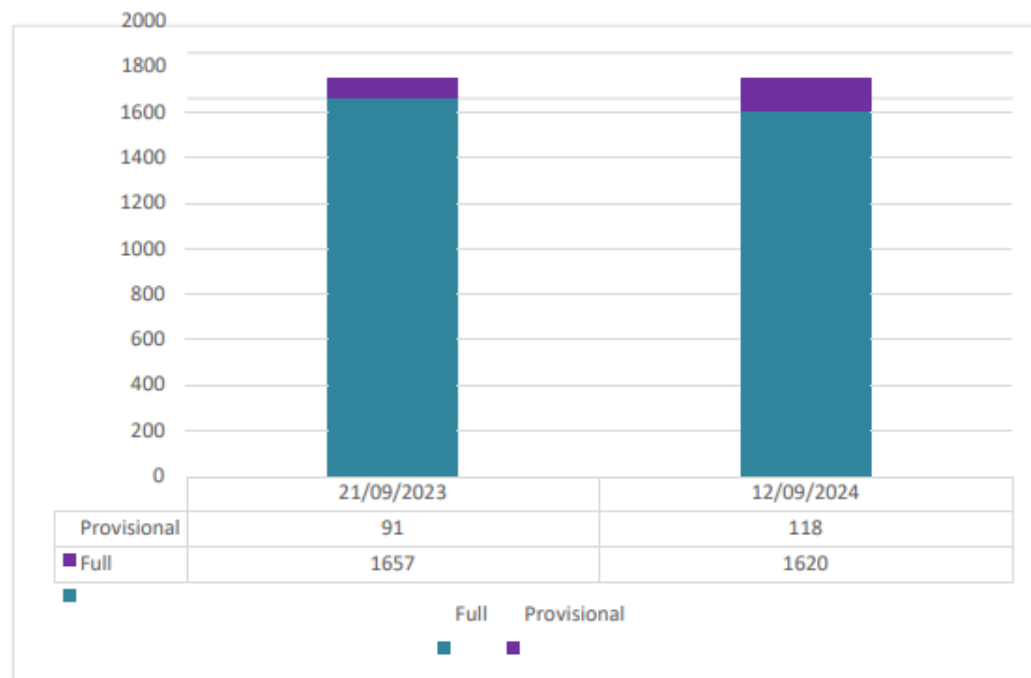


Accreditation Statistics (undertaken 4x per year – Arts Council England)

An overview of the Scheme

Museums in the Scheme

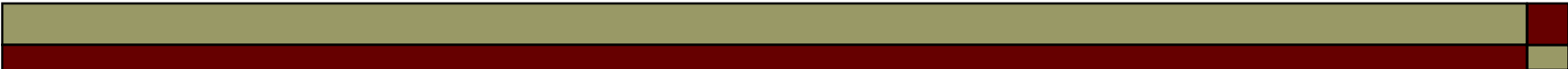
Figure 1: Over the last year there has been a decrease in the number of museums that hold Full Accreditation, alongside an overall decrease in the number of museums in the Scheme.



Between September 2023 and September 2024, there was a decrease of 37 in the number of museums holding **Full Accreditation**.

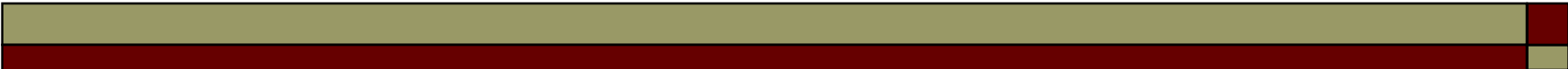
93% of the 1738 museums within the Scheme have demonstrated that they meet the full requirements of the scheme and have been approved by the assessing panel.

When looking at all museums in the Scheme, including those within provisional Accreditation, **the number of museums in the scheme has decreased by ten, from 1748 to 1738.**



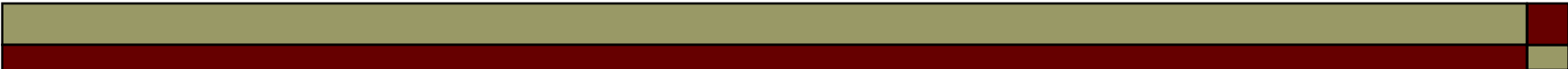
Set guidelines?

- ❑ 12/25 Arts Council England updated guidance documents for meeting the Accreditation Standard to better Accreditation process (content easier to follow and more accessible) without changing standard or requirements
- ❑ <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2025/01/ace-announces-review-of-museum-accreditation-scheme/>
 - ACE announces review of Museum Accreditation scheme (Museums Journal)
 - ❑ Scheme must better reflect sector's needs amid 'challenging' operating environment, says Emmie Adams



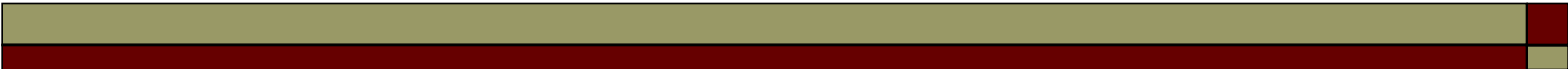
What does it involve?

- ❑ Governance and Management
- ❑ Business/Forward Plan
- ❑ Finances
- ❑ Risk
- ❑ Security
- ❑ Emergency Plan
- ❑ Collections Development
- ❑ Use of and access to information regarding collections
- ❑ Collections Care and Conservation
- ❑ Public Access



Governance and Management

- ❑ Statement of purpose clearly outlining why the museum exists (to display x, y, z) and who it is for (everyone...)
- ❑ An appropriate constitution - a document that outlines how the organisation will operate, that there will be a long-term commitment to be of public benefit and to protect its assets and collections.
- ❑ Full breakdown of roles and responsibilities, whether Trustees, staff or volunteers – including agreed contracts for said roles
- ❑ Proof of access to professional advice



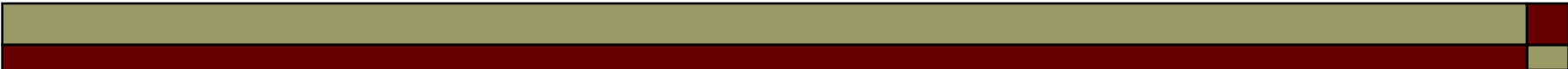
Business/Forward Plan

- ❑ A document that is approved by the governing body (Board or Trustees)
- ❑ Statement of purpose
- ❑ Key aims
- ❑ Timeframe
- ❑ What will be required to achieve all aims/objectives (financial support etc)
- ❑ Budget breakdown



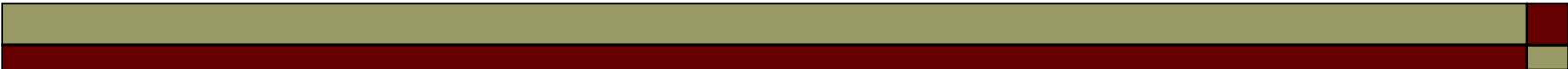
Finances

- ❑ Full accounts for at least 2 consecutive financial years
- ❑ Financial plan for income and expenditure



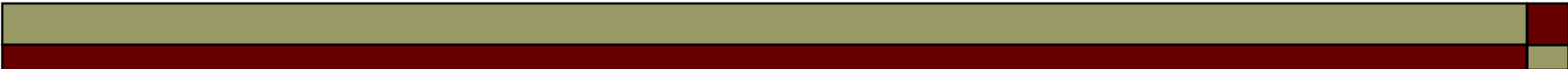
Risk

- ❑ Premises – proof of ownership of the site/buildings
- ❑ Security for all premises – full details of arrangements and insurances
- ❑ Risk assessments for all team members involved in the running of the museum
- ❑ Risk assessment for visitors
- ❑ Risk assessments should be revised every 3-5 years unless there are significant changes made to the organisation
- ❑ Emergency Plan – disaster management, communication
- ❑ Salvage list for collections



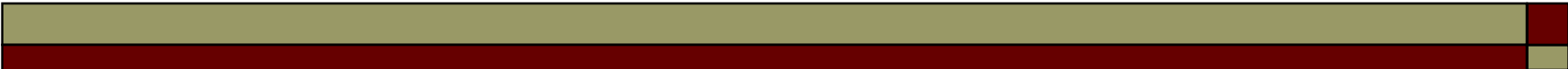
Collections

- ❑ Demonstrate responsibility for managing collections
- ❑ Outline the size of the collection and what they contain
- ❑ Clear definition of what is owned by the museum and what has been loaned to it
- ❑ Collections Development Policy



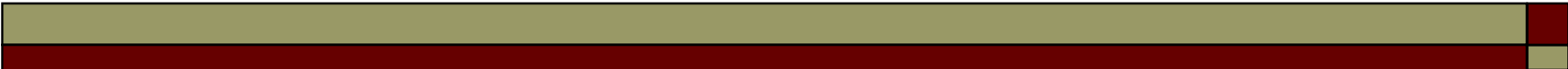
Use of and access to information regarding collections

- ❑ Documentation Policy
- ❑ To be approved by the governing body
- ❑ Must follow SPECTRUM 5.0 of the Collections Trust guidelines on documentation
- ❑ Evidence that the system is being adhered to



Collections Care and Conservation

- ❑ Collections Care and Conservation Policy
- ❑ Approved by the governing body
- ❑ This can sometimes be included in the statement of purpose or the business/forward plan
- ❑ Collections Care and Conservation Plan – outlines what you intend to do and what steps you are going to take to improve the systems in place

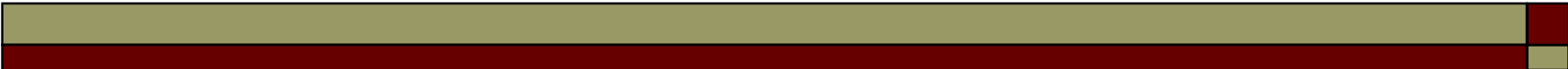


Public access

- ❑ Research the audience – who is visiting the organisation
- ❑ Surveys
- ❑ Feedback
- ❑ Outreach and Engagement – encourage new visitors, wider audience participation
- ❑ Learning
- ❑ Exhibitions, public engagement programme
- ❑ Marketing and promotion

What are the benefits?

- ❑ Museum Accreditation as benchmark for a well-run museum
- ❑ The award (Arts Council England):
 - Help authorities show that their museums meet their visitors' and users' needs
 - Shows their museums are being managed and governed properly
 - Can boost museums' reputations, win funding and give confidence to donors and other supporters
 - Helps museums manage their collections fairly, ethically and legally
 - Gives museums a set of minimum requirements they have to meet, which include accountability and performance management/monitoring progress
 - Opens up opportunities for museums, including funding opportunities and new partnerships
 - Help museums audit their collections, and assess risks to them



Applying for Accreditation

- ❑ All documents must be complete
- ❑ Policies have to be agreed
- ❑ Eligibility Questionnaire
- ❑ Once eligible to apply the organisation must be committed to completing the full application within 3 years
- ❑ Costs