

Steps to sustainable collection care

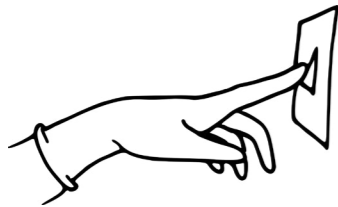


The Welsh Federation of Museums and Art Galleries (The Federation) supports all its members to take action to improve their sustainability and their collection care. The challenges of our changing climate threaten the future of our museums.

The Federation endorses the following action plan and encourages every museum to audit their current practise against it and commit to taking more steps to sustainable practice in the next year.

01 Maintain your building

Everyone can inspect their own buildings and look for signs of trouble. Go outside in the rain and take pictures to help you think about what you are seeing. Put someone in charge of building maintenance and ask them to report on this. Buildings work sometimes does cost a lot but the longer you leave it the more it will cost and the more harm it will do to your collection. Damp air is more expensive (and energy intense) to heat.



04 Lights out



If no one is in the space don't have the lights on. This will reduce the total fade damage to your collections and your energy bills. Good quality LED lighting will provide an efficient lighting solution.

07 Shut that door 2

Keeping your store just for collection storage will allow you to create a stable environment with the least amount of energy. Resist the urge to store unwanted display materials, shop stock, office supplies, or even visiting pets in your store!

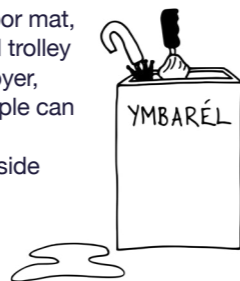
02 Clear the rainwater goods

We don't want any of you falling off ladders but make sure the gutters are emptied of leaves, especially in autumn. If you don't have a good way of accessing your guttering, consider installing fixing points to make safe ladder access. Don't forget you can also compost your leaf mulch.



05 Manage the entrance

People bring moisture, dirt, and pests, especially on rainy days, and we have plenty of these in Wales! Do what you can to stop these things from travelling around your museum. This might look like an umbrella stand, a really big door mat, and / or a buggy and trolley park. If you have a foyer, think about how people can comfortably adjust themselves from outside to in.



08 Get your house in order

It is easier to protect your collections in a tidy and well organised space. Keep objects off the floor, don't overfill shelves, have cleaning access around above and below everything! This will help head off pest infestation and reduce the risk of mould. If your store is accessible for a wheelchair user, then you are almost definitely also providing great physical protection for your collections.



03 Shut that door

We don't need to have the door open to show the museum is open. Be creative, positive and inviting: is there a sign that you can put out that also acts as a selfie point? Can you hang signs that provide access information in multiple languages, admission charges, location of level access point and whether you have accessible toilets?

06 Get in the zone

Understand how each space is used, ask whether a space is public or not and whether it has collections or not, creating 4 zones. Collections are sensitive to humidity and people to temperature, target your energy use only where it is needed. In non-public collection areas focus on passive systems. Make a floor plan and aim to simplify your zones and your life! Makes sure everyone with access supports the careful use of space for sustainability.

09 Share the love

Share your good work and learn from others. Look for and join sustainability networks in your community. Regularly report on your achievements and challenges to decision makers.



12 Environmental targets

Set informed targets for the environmental care of collections. Ensure that standards are only set for the areas, collections, time, and season that you need them (SEE#5). Frost protection is sufficient for most collections. Most collections in Wales have survived dry winters and wet summers and will survive conditions no worse than previously experience with little or no damage.

14 Loan requirements

Don't ask for anything you don't deliver yourself, ask others to set reasonable terms. Ask lenders if case control is sufficient, avoid unnecessary travel and challenge excessive demands. Recognise the social benefits of increasing access when determining your loan conditions.



16 Sustainable purchasing and disposal

Materials that are stable for collections don't decay quickly, so when buying do it once and do it well. Think about the whole life of things you buy: are they made fairly and cleanly; how do they get to you; will you use them to their full specification; how long can you use them; can they be reused by you or someone else? Ensure your waste is safely and sustainably disposed of.



19 If it feels good to do it

Museum collections are there for people to use and engage with. To be a sustainable museum our communities must value what we do. Whilst no one wants collections to be actively neglected don't become so risk averse that no use become useless. A loved collection is a cared for collection.

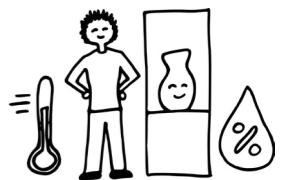
10 Get in Line Get Heard

Research your organisation's priorities and make sure your sustainable collection care practices are seen to align with them. Ensure the organisation knows about the sustainability wins from the collection care strategy.



13 Ideas into action

Experiment with energy efficient solutions such as switch offs, insulation, draft proofing, secondary glazing, and window coverings. Work with nature and plan the landscape to protect the building.



15 Service your stuff

Keep conditions stable by ensuring your team know how to report building maintenance issues. Have a schedule to service heating and environmental control equipment and do regular visual checks. Do basic maintenance like defrosting freezers, checking thermostats, and replacing lamps. A stitch in time saves energy.

17 Plan

Make this work manageable by building daily, monthly, and annual checklists. Prioritise easy wins and celebrate success. Make a start but plan for the long-term even if it seems impossible now. This might be a long-time project but it's good to have goals.



18 Dream Big

Things might be different in the future so plan your dream solution. This might involve building work, refitting, new projects, new partnerships, or ambitious targets. Don't be embarrassed to know what you want. If you don't ask you don't get and if you have something in your back pocket, you can be ready to go if an opportunity arises.

20 Sustain you

This can be hard work, take time to sustain you and your team for a sustainable future.

