

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL'S MUSEUMS SERVICE EXIT POLICY

Policy Summary

Policy Status	Approved and finalised by the committee on 04/09/2025
Responsible Officer	Amy Miller, Museum Development Co-ordinator
Policy Sponsor	Chris Murphy, Service Manager, Live Life Aberdeenshire
Authorised By	Communities Committee
Policy Review Date	04/09/2030

1. Policy Statement

Aberdeenshire Museums Service maintains, develops, researches, conserves, and provides access to historic and artistic collections held in trust for by Aberdeenshire Council for future generations.

The Exit Policy is to enable Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service to be accountable for all items leaving the Museums Service, to define the permitted reasons for exit, to define the authorisation levels for permitting exit and to define the minimum level of documentation required.

2. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to:

- 2.1 Operations at Live Life Aberdeenshire Museums facilities including the Discovery Centre / Museum HQ, Aberdeenshire Farming Museum, and Banchory Museum
- 2.2 Accessioned items or significant parts of accessioned items which currently form part of the permanent collections, and which are leaving the Museums Service for any reason.
- 2.3 Items on loan to Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service when they are returned to their owners, or which leave the Museums Service temporarily for any reason.
- 2.4 Items being moved by a contractor from one site or branch to another, or from one branch to a non-Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service destination.
- 2.5 This policy does not generally apply to:
 - Material moved internally from one Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service site / branch to another by Museums Service staff.



- The movement of educational resources or gallery furnishings
- Material moved out of any of the Museums Service's sites / branches in the event of disaster or other major incident. In these instances the Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service Disaster Plan procedure will be followed.

2.6 Exit is always the result of another Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service transaction, and other procedures will dictate the exact point at which Exit comes into effect and any special conditions which may apply. The activities which will most commonly result in Exit are:

- Loans in (return to owner of borrowed material or temporary movement off site for any reason).
- Loans out (despatch of Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service material).
- Location and Movement Control.
- Collections Care and Conservation taking place at an external site.
- Deaccession and Disposal.
- Creation of surrogate copies and digitisation taking place at an external site.

3. Policy Principles & Equalities

- 3.1 As a responsible custodian of public collections, the Museums Service is required to review its museum policies every five years. This is an essential element of fulfilling the nationally agreed standards of our Accreditation status.
- 3.2 This suite of documents covers a range of requirements and are presented to Communities Committee for approval as the governing body.
- 3.3 Approval of these policies is essential to maintain Spectrum museum documentation procedural standards and fulfil national requirements set by Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS).
- 3.4 The intervening period since the last review has seen significant changes for Aberdeenshire Museums Service; notably the appointment of a new professional team and a multi-million-pound investment from the UK Government in a new museum representing the whole of Aberdeenshire. As a team we now have a far better understanding of our facilities and collections and this knowledge has resulted in a refocus as we plan for the next five years.
- 3.5 During the development and review of policies, Officers and Elected Members are legally required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Fairer Scotland Duty.



4. Purpose

- 4.1 Exit is defined as the management and documentation of items accessioned by Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service, or on loan to it, leaving the responsibility and care of the Museums Service, either permanently or for a temporary period.
- 4.2 The term "exit" is used throughout this Policy with this meaning and no other.
- 4.3 Exit refers solely to the movement of the Museums Service's accessioned items and items on loan to it, which are leaving its responsibility and is not intended to mirror Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service's Entry Policy, which also governs the movement of unaccessioned material.
- 4.4 The purpose of the Policy is to enable Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service to be accountable for all accessioned items leaving the Museums Service, which are on loan to it, to define the permitted reasons for exit, to define the authorisation levels for permitting exit and to define the minimum level of documentation required.

5. Scope

This Policy applies to:

- 5.1 All sites and branches of Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service.
- 5.2 Accessioned items or significant parts of accessioned items which currently form part of the permanent collections, and which are leaving the Museums Service for any reason.
- 5.3 Items on loan to Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service when they are returned to their owners, or which leave the Museums Service temporarily for any reason.
- 5.4 Items being moved by a contractor from one site or branch to another, or from one branch to a non-Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service destination.
- 5.5 This Policy does not generally apply to:
 - Material moved internally from one Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service site / branch to another by Museums Service staff.
 - The movement of items, which are part of the Handling Collection, or to unaccessioned "props", except when such items are leaving the Museums Service under the Disposal procedure.
 - Material moved out of any of the Museums Service's sites / branches in the event of disaster or another emergency although some form of inventory will be required. Refer to the Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service Disaster Plan for further information.
 - The movement of unaccessioned material.



- 5.6 Copies made for sale or free distribution to members of the public or other external organisations.
- 5.7 Exit is always the result of another Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service transaction, and other procedures will dictate the exact point at which Exit comes into effect and any special conditions which may apply. The activities which will most commonly result in Exit are:
- Loans in (return to owner of borrowed material or temporary movement off site for any reason).
 - Loans out (despatch of Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service material).
 - Location and Movement Control.
 - Collections Care and Conservation.
 - Deaccession and Disposal.
 - Creation of surrogate copies.

6. Liability, Insurance and Indemnity

- 6.1 In all circumstances, the liability for damage and security when items leave Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service falls upon the Museums Service until the receiving institution, organisation, individual or their authorised agent accepts the item and signs Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service's Exit Form acknowledging responsibility for the item.
- 6.2 If the Museums Service is not using its own transport, the contractors or shippers chosen must be approved by Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service, except in the case of a returning Loan In item when the lender has specified a contractor.
- 6.3 In certain circumstances a member of the Museums Service staff will be required to accompany an item as courier to ensure it reaches its destination safely.
- 6.4 When items leave the care of Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service for any reason steps must be taken to ensure that insurance or indemnity cover is adequate, whether items are to be transported at the Museums Service's or the recipient's risk.
- 6.5 On occasion, where an owner has approved this method, items may be sent by the Royal Mail's Special Delivery service. Royal Mail's maximum liability for Special Delivery should be checked to make sure that the value of the item does not exceed it. If it does, then an alternative method of Exit must be found.

7. Authorisation

- 7.1 Only authorised staff may approve the Exit of an item from Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service and/or the permanent collections.
- 7.2 Authorised staff must ensure that all necessary permissions have been granted before authorising an Exit transaction, liaising with the Documentation section.
- 7.3 Authorised staff are:
- Museums Development Co-ordinator



- Museum Curator
- Museum Conservator

8. Documentation

- 8.1 Every exit transaction must be supported by an authorised Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service business document appropriate to the case. For example, an artefact leaving the Museums Service on loan must have completed Loan Out documentation.
- 8.2 As per Spectrum 5.0, Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service will document the exit of items from the Museums Service in order to track them and to maintain a link between the item and any information about it. The information that must be recorded is:
- Exit or other transaction reference number
 - Any unique identifying numbers for the items
 - Brief description of items
 - Condition note
 - Information about any hazards associated with the material
 - Reference to appropriate file containing additional details (e.g. loan-in file, acquisition/disposal file)
 - Reason for exit
 - Method of despatch
 - Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service courier (if used).
 - Authorising signature of Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service.
 - Date of exit
 - Destination name, address and telephone number
 - On delivery – signature of authorised receiver
 - On delivery – date of receipt
 - If appropriate – on return – signature of receiving Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service staff
 - If appropriate – on return – date of return to Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service staff
- 8.3 This information will be recorded on an Exit Form.
- 8.4 A form for exit may be otherwise generated, provided it contains all the information at 17 above. If required for departmental administration, other data can also be recorded on a form recording exit provided the form still fulfils its exit function.
- 8.5 Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service may also be expected to provide one or more of the following documents, not necessarily related to its own systems and procedures:
- Customs clearance
 - Export licences
 - Shipping instructions/forms
 - Insurance certificate
 - Packing/Unpacking instructions
 - Condition check forms



9. How long, and in what form, Exit Information is held

Exit information will be retained in perpetuity by Aberdeenshire Council's Museums Service in electronic or manual form.

10. Exceptions

There are no exceptions to this Policy, other than those explicitly defined in the Scope section.

11. Supporting Policies and Documents

The following guidance documents have assisted in the creation of this policy:

- [Collections Trust Spectrum standard for museum collections management](#)
- [Museums Association Code of Ethics](#)
- [Museum Accreditation Standard](#)
- [Standing Conference on Archives and Museums' Code of Practice on Archives for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom](#)
- [ICON Professional Standards and Judgement & Ethics](#)
- [UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property](#)
- [Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Scottish Museum Collections](#)
- [Statement of Principles relating to the Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period](#)
- [CITES multilateral treaty](#)

12. Council Strategic Priorities

Pillar	Priority	How does the policy reflect the Council's strategic Priorities?
A sustainable economy	We will support a strong and diverse economy by attracting people of working age to our region, complementing our highly skilled local workforce.	This policy helps to deliver Council priorities Connected Communities, Living Well Locally as the Museum Service and its policies underpin access to high quality cultural experiences with an increased sense of place and local connection that promote positive social interactions, lifelong learning, improve wellbeing and reduce mental health issues in all ages.
Connected communities	We will work with communities and partners to enhance the sense of connection among our places. This includes supporting communities to come up with innovative solutions to ensure our places are resilient and vibrant.	
Living well locally	We will encourage and support our residents to lead healthy and active lives and contribute meaningfully to their communities. We will make	



Pillar	Priority	How does the policy reflect the Council's strategic Priorities?
	proactive choices that will allow us to cater to the needs of our increasingly ageing population.	

13. Policy Revision

Version Number	Revision Date	Committee Approval Date	Summary of Changes
2.0	12/05/2025	04/09/2025	<p>Section 4, Purpose: Updated text now defines that the purpose of the policy is to enable the Museum Service to be accountable for all the items leaving its care.</p> <p>Section 6, Scope: It has been added that this policy does not apply to material moved out of any of the Museums Service's sites / branches in the event of disaster or other major incident. The updated text also states that in those instances the Aberdeenshire Council Museums Service Disaster Plan procedure will be followed.</p> <p>Section 7, Scope: Collections Care and Conservation taking place at an external site, and Creation of surrogate copies and digitisation taking place at an external site have been added to the list of activities that will result in object exit.</p> <p>Section 16, Documentation: Spectrum standard 5.0 has been updated to 5.1 to align with the most recent version of the standard.</p> <p>Section 18, Documentation: It has been added that the information from the completed Exit Form, including the current location of exited objects, will also be recorded in our collection management system. In addition, the policy now states that the paper forms will be filed in accordance with the</p>



Version Number	Revision Date	Committee Approval Date	Summary of Changes
			Location and Movement Control Procedure.

14. Policy Distribution

Name	Designation	Organisation
Allan Rae	Head of Service, Communities, Wellbeing and Partnerships	Aberdeenshire Council
Chris Murphy	Service Manager, Programme Development	Aberdeenshire Council
Saskia Gibbon	Cultural Engagement Manager	Aberdeenshire Council
Douglas Henderson	Senior Insurance Officer	Aberdeenshire & Aberdeen City Councils
Jacob O'Sullivan	Museum Development Manager – Collections & Interpretation	Museums Galleries Scotland

[ENDS]