

Role: Head of Collections	Region / Department: Conservation & Policy
Reports to: Director of Conservation & Policy	Pay Band: Grade 6 Upper: £64,953 - £72,168 per annum.
Location: Broadstone, 50 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh, EH12 9LD.	Type of Contract: Permanent, Full-Time, 40 Hours Per Week
COST CENTRE (e.g.: 3CUZ): 2001	ACTIVITY CODE (e.g.: VSZ): CLZ

JOB PURPOSE

The Head of Collections provides strategic leadership and policy oversight across the management, care and conservation of collections and interiors, as well as the technical solutions that support delivery of this work across the Trust. The scope of interest within the Collections Team includes historic interiors, objects, books, photographs, digital collections and archives. This national role supports, advises and at times directs colleagues in regional and local teams to maintain standards and further the strategic priorities of the trust and leads on the promotion of the importance of management and conservation of collections for preservation and access in support of the Trust's charitable purpose.

Internally, the role is responsible for establishing and managing systems and standards (both IT systems, and manual processes) that are responsive to the operational needs of the Trust and lead to efficiencies and improvements in Collections Development, Collections Care and Conservation, Collections Information Management, and Access to collections information. Externally, the post-holder will have lead responsibility and maintain relationships with key sector bodies in cultural collections management, such as Museums Galleries Scotland, ICON, Collections Trust, CILIP and the ARA, as well as managing relationships with research partners in museums, archives, and universities on collaborative collections management and conservation research projects. They will pursue opportunities to promote the Trust's work, as well as constant horizon scanning to ensure NTS can anticipate and respond to national and international trends in collections management and conservation.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Provides leadership in collections management, collections care and conservation; ensuring that NTS heritage collections are managed in line with national and internationally recognised standards and legislation
- Develops policies, strategic plans, and projects for the consistent documentation and cataloguing of all collections.
- Develops policies, strategic plans, and projects for the delivery of collections care and conservation in line with NTS strategic priorities, determined, when possible, through interpretation of data
- Leads on an NTS-wide strategic approach to collections review and rationalisation, the reduction of long-term loans, and the long-term management of stored collections
- Oversees the development of integrated information management systems across the collections, optimising use of existing database systems (Axiell Collections, Portfolio Extensis, Preservica) and the CIIM middleware, and working closely with suppliers and the IT Services

- Leads on the development of digitisation strategy, digital preservation of digital archives and photographic collections, and the implementation of good practice in IPR management within the NTS collections systems and processes
- Ensures highest standards of courtesy and stakeholder management from the Collections Team when responding to and working with lenders, donors, funders and donor families
- Provides expert technical advice and support to colleagues in operational teams and supports development of relevant internal networks in archive, library and collections management and collections care and conservation practice
- Oversees the development of policies and processes to improve the safety and security of collections, including; monitoring and responding to trends in loss and damage to collections, advising regional teams on how to access specialist collections security advice, working with the People Team to embed mandatory collections security training into annual programmes, and ensuring availability of training and support for collections audit, emergency planning and collections salvage
- Maintains systems for the valuation of collections for insurance purposes, and the regular and efficient reporting required by the insurers and lenders including during major incidents and emergencies involving collections
- Leads on the acquisition and disposal process for collections and objects to support decision making by ExCo and the Board as necessary.
- Works collaboratively with colleagues in Audiences and Support and Public Engagement and Research Directorate, to develop projects that will expand public engagement with and understanding of the Trust's collections and their importance through the development of online access via the Trust's website, and through other means, such as exhibitions and learning and research programmes
- Proactively seeks opportunities to promote NTS externally by promoting examples of internal best practice and act as the lead advocate internally for integrated collections management, collections care and conservation, and digital preservation
- Ensures regional property staff can access professional collections care and management support for all collections, including archives and historic libraries, at the earliest stage in project planning. They should expect to receive integrated support for acquisitions, exhibition planning, long loans, review and rationalisation, auditing and location control, collection decants, pest management and house-keeping regimes, remedial conservation and training for property staff.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS, EXPERIENCE & KNOWLEDGE

Qualifications

Essential

- Undergraduate degree in a relevant subject or demonstrable knowledge gained in a similar or transferable role
- Post-graduate qualification in Museum Studies, Collections Conservation or equivalent

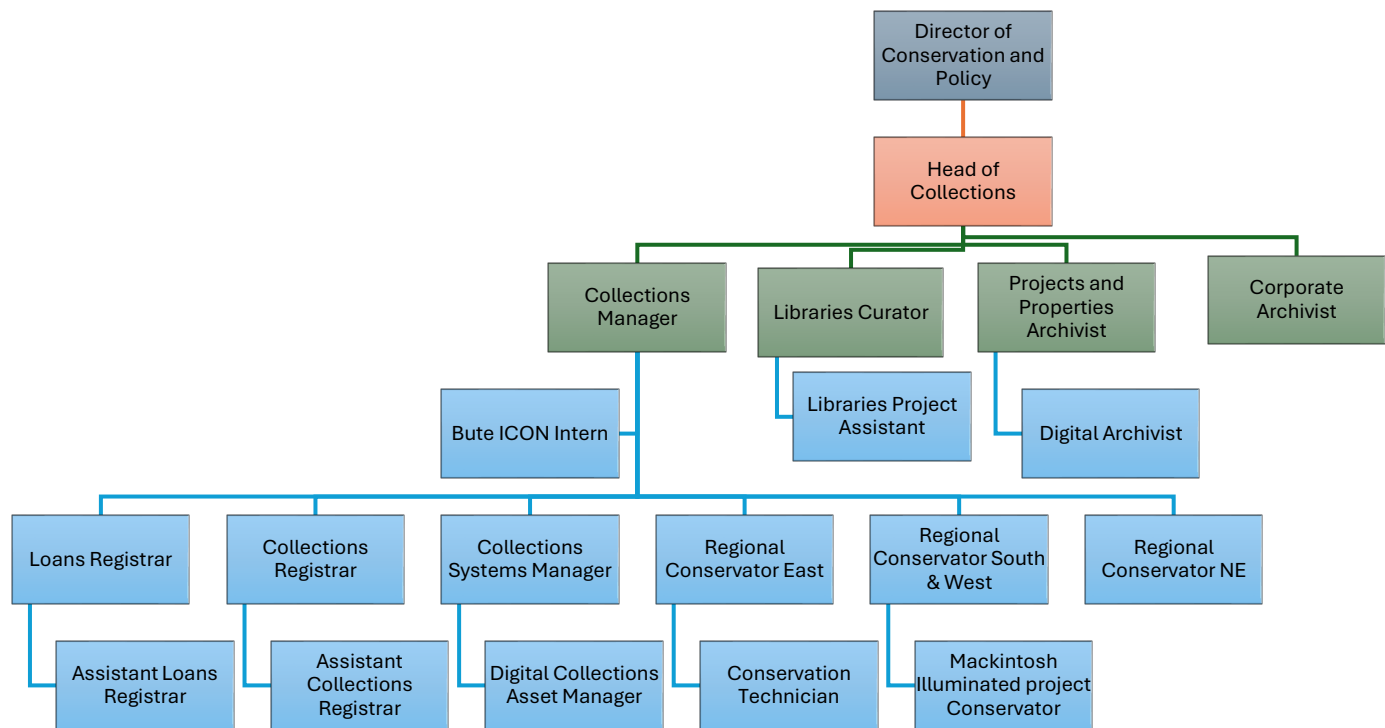
Skills experience and Knowledge

- Recognized leader in the field of heritage collections management with direct experience in a senior collections management role within a heritage/museum context
- Highly developed and proven team management skills and experience

- A passion for communicating to the public the importance of heritage collections, and working with others to find innovative ways of doing so
- Strong IT skills with proven specialist knowledge of collections management systems
- Sound knowledge of ethical, legal, insurance and indemnity issues for heritage collections.
- Strong technical knowledge of current best practice in collections management and documentation across museums, archives, and libraries
- Strong understanding of best practice in the Care & Conservation of collections and interiors
- Demonstrable experience of best practice standards for digitisation and digital preservation
- A track record of developing policy and strategy and delivering against strategy
- Experience of managing large collections management projects and managing multiple priorities
- Proven ability to compile an argument/business case for funding support (from internal or external sources)
- Excellent liaison and negotiation skills and ability to communicate clearly, both orally and in writing
- Outstanding interpersonal skills with a track record of high-level advocacy, both internal and external
- Strong UK and international professional networks and contacts within the sector
- Experience of commissioning and working with a wide range of external contractors
- A current driving license and willingness to travel regularly across Scotland and further afield.

Desirable

- Strong technical knowledge of current best practice in data management across natural heritage, archaeology, historic buildings, and digital collections



DIMENSIONS AND SCOPE OF JOB

People

- ♦ There are currently 14 permanent members of the team, with three temporary project staff and one intern. The team may grow to a total of 30 staff at any one time due to future project teams
- ♦ This senior national management role interacts with and has influence over a wide range of staff across the organisation at all levels

Finance

- Budget holder – current annual combined team budget of over £900,000 including salaries.
- Project budgets vary. Responsibility for three ongoing projects in 2025/26 with combined budgets of £320,000. Potential future combined project budgets for 2025-2030 of over £1.5 million

The Purpose, Context, Key Responsibilities, and Person Specification reflect the requirements of the job at the time of issue. The Trust reserves the right to amend these with appropriate consultation and/or request the post-holder to undertake any activities that it believes to be reasonable within the broad scope of the job or his/her general abilities.

How to Apply

Interested applicants should forward their Curriculum Vitae (CV) or an Application Form to the People Services Department (Applications) by email via workforus@nts.org.uk by Friday 16th January 2026.

Please ensure your CV includes your full name and contact details, the CV file sent to us should be titled your first initial and surname. When submitting your CV please state the position and job location of the vacancy you are applying for in the subject title or body of your email: For example, "Head of Collections - NTS"