

Supporting Scotland's Museums and Galleries

Our Actions and Impact

2025-26



MGS Actions and Impact

2025-26

Welcome to our Impact Report for 2025-26.

As the national development body for the Scottish museum sector, we support 448 museums and galleries through strategic investment, advice, skills development, and advocacy.

In collaboration with the sector and a wide range of partners, we also lead the delivery of Scotland's Museums and Galleries Strategy.

Our actions have been made possible with the support of the Scottish Government, The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the People's Postcode Lottery, Art Fund, The Baring Foundation, and Esmée Fairbairn.



SCAN ME



For more detailed information on the work we have undertaken, including our financials, you can read our Annual Review online.

www.museumsgalleryscotland.org.uk/annual-review-2025-26

Scan the QR code for more information.

Grant Making

In 2025-26, we awarded:

190 grants through **13 funding streams** supporting **111 organisations** to a value of **£6,506,522**.

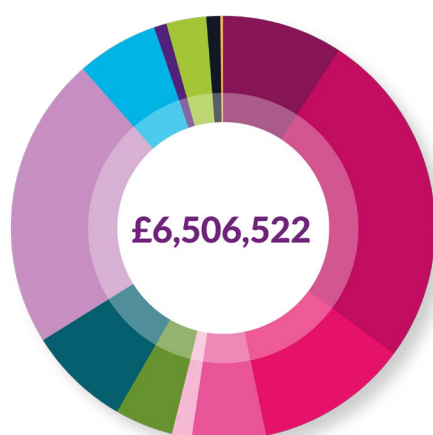
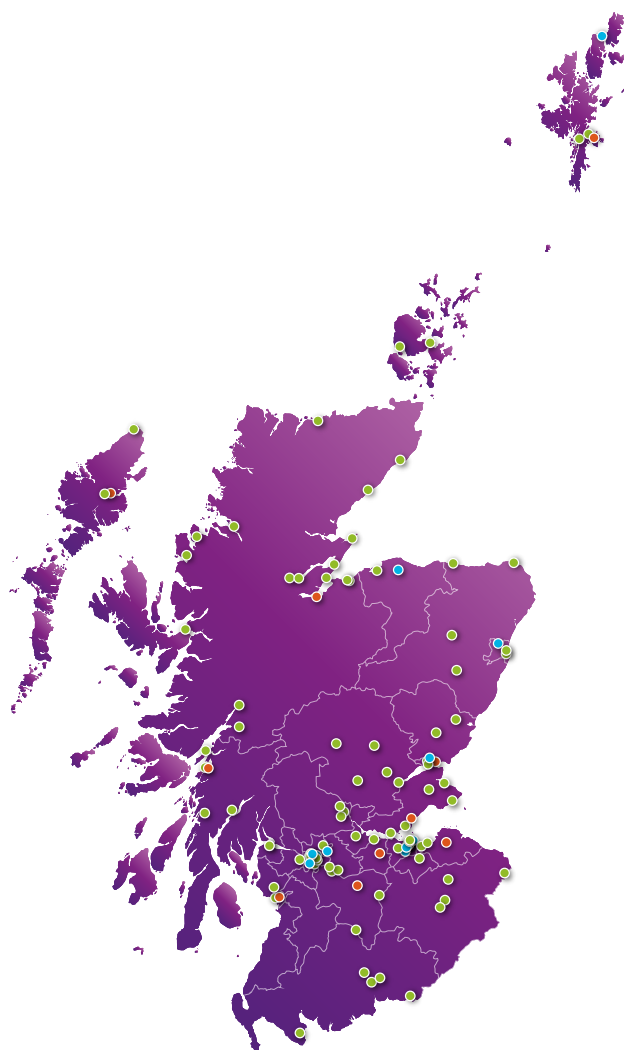
Funding Streams

Museum Futures funding:

Leadership Capacity Fund	£599,724
Innovation Fund	£1,685,652
Unlocking Potential Fund	£756,332
Pathfinders	£365,800
Micro Grants	£98,503

Other funds:

Small Grants Fund	£288,661
Museum Development Fund	£506,421
Repair and Adaptation Fund	£1,455,717
Discretionary Fund	£406,000
Protection Through Connection Fund	£62,904
Community Catalysts	£197,998
Creative Minds Fund	£67,810
Forum Fund	£15,000



Key

- Museum organisations
- Geographic Forums
- Community organisations



Scotland's Museums and Galleries Strategy delivery

In the third year of the Strategy, we have:

Adapted our planning to support **Museum Futures delivery**.

Hosted our third **Strategy Symposium**, attended by **242 delegates** in person and online.

Launched a **sector survey** to gather insights to help inform refreshed strategy actions for 2026-27.



Supported the sector to deliver against the Strategy's three strands, as set out in our **Business Plan** and **Operational Plan**.



"I enjoyed the talks and sessions immensely and liked the range of topics covered. It was very inspiring."

Museum delegate attending the Strategy Symposium



Connecting with the sector

MGS staff made **129 visits** to **82 museums** across **21** of Scotland's **32 Local Authority areas**.

MGS Forum Representatives supported **12 Geographic Forums**, attending meetings and sharing opportunities and advice.

Through the **Museum Futures programme**, we engaged with over **100 museum organisations** across **24 Local Authority areas**.



Knowledge sharing

A total of **51 MGS learning opportunities** were provided to the sector.



Participants from 112 organisations across **30 Local Authority** areas engaged with our learning opportunities. **95% agreed** or strongly agreed that these opportunities increased their confidence in the topic.



Accreditation

249 MUSEUMS in Scotland currently meet the UK Museum Accreditation Standard (as of July 2026).

Between April 2025 and March 2026:

- » **1 museum** achieved full Accreditation for the first time.
- » **56 museums** have been assessed through to the panel decision.
- » **4 Accreditation assessment** site visits took place.
- » **2 UK-wide sessions** for new and existing Accreditation mentors were held in January and February.



Recognition

5 applications were received in March for consideration by the **Recognition Committee**.



Hosted an in-person **Recognised Collection Holders meeting**.

Appointed a **new Chair** to the Recognition Committee.



Workforce

All people are welcomed, respected and their professional and lived experience valued within the museums and galleries sector. Museums and galleries actively diversify the workforce and adopt Fair Work principles. All employees and volunteers have access to opportunities that develop their skills and confidence.

Scotland's Museums and Galleries Strategy

Delivered **30 one-to-one employability surgeries** and **3 employability lunch and learn events**.



Successfully delivered **17 Modern Apprenticeship** qualifications/opportunities.



Hosted a workshop on the **impact of investing in apprentices** at the Strategy Symposium.

"The apprenticeship has given me confidence to take ownership of the work I'm doing, bring new ideas to my team, and support the organisation in reaching a younger audience and hopefully turning them into the next generation of supporters."

Digital Marketing Modern Apprentice,
National Trust for Scotland

Delivered **2 further cohorts** of the accredited **Developing My Leadership Programme**.

Welcomed **11 reciprocal mentorship pairings**, including Museum Transformer leaders, to undertake the **Delivering Change: Leadership Programme**.



Connection

Access to culture is a human right, and museums should enable all people to enjoy a cultural life. Museums and galleries can apply this strategy to maximise their positive impact on individuals and communities, building connections which will foster a culture of inclusivity, engagement, and understanding.

Scotland's Museums and Galleries Strategy

"It was great to see the success of something that's traditionally seen as difficult to do as well as the positive impact that returning Celeste [the giant galliwasps] has had for the community in Jamaica. The Drs from Jamaica were very inspiring!"

Symposium delegate attending the Return Stories panel session

DELIVERING CHANGE

Second year of three-year programme.

- » Delivered **46 different learning opportunities** to programme participants.
- » Welcomed over **40 delegates** to participate in a workshop about Museum Activists at the Strategy Symposium.
- » Invited over **50 Delivering Change participants** to an afternoon meet-up at the Strategy Symposium.
- » Awarded **7 community groups and partner museums** with funding and wraparound support.
- » Supported **5 museum partnerships** to undertake **Sustainable Co-production**, working with community partners.

Hosted a Strategy Symposium panel discussion on **Repatriation and Restitution** and ran a workshop on **how museums can support public health and wellbeing**.





Awarded **4 museums grants** from the **Creative Minds Fund**, supporting work with mental health organisations to create opportunities for people experiencing mental health issues.

Launched **Protection through Connection**, a two-year project to support communities to record, showcase and safeguard cultural traditions. **7 projects** received funding and wraparound support.

Provided support and advice, as one of two **Community Support Hubs** in Scotland, to Scottish communities and practitioners with submissions to **The Living Heritage in the UK National Inventory**.

Co-hosted the **ICH in Scotland Conference** which was attended by over **100 delegates**.

Awarded **seed funding** to **10 Geographic Forums**, with thanks to Art Fund.



Resilience

Scotland's museums and galleries actively seek to adapt and evolve in response to social, economic, and environmental factors. With future sustainability an underpinning goal, museums and galleries collaborate to tackle challenges and maximise opportunities.

Scotland's Museums and Galleries Strategy

"It's a chance to be more visionary but also to look at the practical steps that we can take now."

A member of the Museum Futures Leadership Capacity cohort

Hosted panel discussions at the Strategy Symposium: one featuring **Museum Futures participants' first stories** and another exploring **museum collaboration on climate action**.



Launched the new **Climate and Nature Planning training course**, through the Museum Futures programme.



Launched **MUSEUM FUTURES**, a pioneering programme, developed in partnership with the Scottish Government and The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

- » Engaged with over **100 museum organisations** across **24 Local Authority areas**, providing access to training and funding.
- » Partnered with **14 key organisations** to offer training and development opportunities to **110 museums** through **21 activities**.
- » Awarded **58** organisations at least one of **94 grants** totalling **£3.5million**.
- » Distributed **£756,332** through the **Unlocking Potential Fund** and **£1,685,652** through the **Innovation Fund**.
- » Made **3 Pathfinder Pilot awards**, supporting new and collaborative ways of working.
- » Supported **17 museums** to free up leadership time for strategic work, coaching and peer support.
- » Agreed to support **9 peer-to-peer Knowledge Exchanges** through bursaries, enabling museums to visit and learn from others across the sector.





Marketing support

Worked with **Global Marketing team at VisitScotland**, to raise profile of museums and galleries across Scotland. Shared activities and exhibitions for their autumn/winter consumer campaign.



Updated our **#MuseumsAreGo** campaign page and map, which is linked across several areas of VisitScotland's consumer website.

Awarded **photography bursaries** to **5 museums**, to augment their marketing activity.



9 museums attended **one-to-one marketing support surgeries**.

Partnered with **Arts Marketing Association (AMA)** to deliver the **Essentials of Marketing** course through Museum Futures, providing **30 fully funded places** over **2 cohorts**.

Awarded **11 bursaries** for museums colleagues to attend **AMA professional development events**.

"I left the [AMA] conference feeling much more confident about what I can achieve in marketing for our organisation".

AMA Conference Delegate and recipient of bursary



Supporting our people

Undertook **significant recruitment**, with a focus on capacity across all teams to deliver **Museum Futures programme**.



Provided over 1,200 hours of **cross-team learning and development** for MGS staff across a range of areas, in addition to individual development activities and access to self-led learning. Also joined the Charity Mentoring Network.

Published an **anti-racism action plan** for MGS following the completion of our all-staff anti-racism training.



Supported our **Digital Marketing Apprentice** to complete their qualification and appointed a new **Business Administration Apprentice**.



Undertook a **Board skills and diversity review**. Some Board members participated in anti-racism training.

Recognised as an **inclusive employer** by the Scottish Union of Supported Employment (SUSE).

Submitted our application to the **LGBT Charter**.



Retained **Gold Accreditation** from Investors in People.



Advocacy

Focused on strengthening our advocacy work and raising awareness of the vital role museums and galleries play across Scotland.

- » Met **Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and Culture**, to discuss a multi-year approach to Museum Futures.
- » Engaged **politicians, civic leaders and council officials** at party-political conferences and the COSLA conference.

- » **Worked in partnership** on consultation responses and advocacy, including giving evidence to the Scottish Parliament on the need for stable sector investment.
- » Launched a **national advocacy campaign** ahead of the 2026 Scottish Parliament Elections.
- » Hosted a **cross-party panel discussion of MSPs** at the **Strategy Symposium**.
- » **Facilitated a visit** by the Cabinet Secretary to a participating museum to showcase the early impact of the **Museum Futures programme**.

