Statutory agencies and public bodies' guidance

See all updates

It is a term of all the funding we award, and which we distribute for others, that grantees must follow all legislation and regulations that apply to their project.

By reading this guidance you'll get a summary of agencies and advice relevant to a wide range of heritage projects.

It is not intended to be a comprehensive list. As you prepare your application and plan your project, you should do your own research to identify other statutory guidance that may be applicable. This list will help you get started thinking about what might be relevant for you.

The historic environment

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

While most advice and guidance from DCMS is provided through agencies and arm's length bodies, DCMS does publish some guidance on sector specific issues across civil society and culture.

DCMS has published guidance on Dealing with Commemorative Heritage Assets that have become Contested, also referred to as the 'retain and explain' policy. This policy, published in 2023, focuses on retaining commemorative heritage assets in situ and providing comprehensive explanation that allows the whole story of the person, building or event to be told so that the historic context can be more fully understood. This policy applies to statues, monuments or commemorations in England. It does not cover museums and galleries' collections, intangible heritage or commemorations outside England.

Historic England

The government's advisory body on the historic environment in England, including for designation and particular statutory roles in the planning system. Its advice library contains information and guidance on:

- the planning system for capital projects, developers and owners of historic buildings, parks, gardens, battlefields and monuments
- how to deliver projects involving caring for, restoring and conserving historic sites, including retrofit
- the Heritage at Risk Register
- case studies and good practice on consulting and re-interpreting contested heritage

Historic Environment Scotland

The arm's length body that cares for and promotes Scotland's historic environment and provides research and analysis to inform practice. Its advice and guidance offer includes topics such as:

- listed buildings, scheduled monuments and other designations
- planning advice and consents
- the Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland

Cadw

The statutory body that exists to protect Wales' historic environment and promote sustainable development. Its advice and guidance covers:

- protecting and managing historic assets including listed buildings and scheduled monuments
- planning advice including heritage impact assessments
- climate change and the historic environment

In 2020, Wales' First Minister appointed a task and finish group to audit public monuments, street and building names to better understand links with slavery and the British Empire in Africa and the West Indies. It was also asked to research and identify historical figures of black heritage in Wales. Explore the findings (revised in December 2021): The Slave Trade and the British Empire: An Audit of Commemoration in Wales.

Department for Communities' Historic Environment Division, Northern Ireland

The expert advisory body for the historic environment for Northern Ireland. It records, protects, conserves and promotes Northern Ireland's historic environment and publishes guidance, toolkits, online maps and databases.

Museums, libraries and archives

Arts Council England

The sector development agency for creativity and culture in England. It publishes advice and guidance but it is largely focused on its own grant programmes and investment principles.

Museums Galleries Scotland

The national development body for Scotland's museum sector. It provides a wide range of advice and guidance to support museums and galleries in Scotland, covering collections, audiences and engagement.

The Scottish Government sponsored project, Empire, Slavery & Scotland's Museums, made recommendations on how Scotland's involvement in imperialism, colonialism and historic slavery can be addressed using museums and collections.

Arts Council Wales

The statutory body that funds, develops and advises on arts in Wales. It provides information, guidance and advice primarily for its own funding streams, but some guidance may also be relevant to more creative cultural projects in Wales.

The Welsh Government has also produced guidance for public bodies and local authorities on how to approach public commemoration in Wales.

Arts Council Northern Ireland

The funding and development organisation for the arts in Northern Ireland. The agency publishes guidance for its own funded projects, toolkits and research.

Land, sea and nature

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Defra publishes statutory guidance on policy and legislation that affect land and nature projects in England, including guidance on:

- biodiversity and ecosystems
- local nature recovery
- biodiversity net gain

Natural England

The government's adviser for the natural environment in England. It helps to protect nature and landscapes and publishes technical guidance on all aspects of stewardship and management of the natural environment.

NatureScot

The lead public body responsible for advising the Scottish Government on the promotion, care and sustainable use of its natural heritage. It provides policy and guidance notes on a range of topics relating to nature and landscapes.

Natural Resources Wales

The public body sponsored by the Welsh Government to protect and enhance the natural environment and achieve sustainable management of natural resources as set out in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. It provides guidance and advice across a number of topics and environmental sectors.

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

An executive agency within the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs. It exists to protect and enhance the environment, deliver health and wellbeing benefits and support economic growth in Northern Ireland. Guidance and resources are published on its website.

Other statutory guidance themes

Depending on your heritage and the nature of the project activities and outputs you are planning, it may also be relevant to consider the guidance and advice from statutory bodies including:

- **Health and Safety Executive**: topics such as running safe public events
- **The Information Commissioner's Office**: a variety of guides and tools on data protection and data management
- **Department for Education for England and devolved governments**: statutory guidance on safeguarding for organisations involved in education and organisations that work with children and young people

- **The Charity Commission for England and Wales and the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)** provide guidance on legal and regulatory issues for charity governance, fundraising, accounts, financial reporting, tax and setting up or closing registered charities in their respective jurisdictions in England and Wales and for Scotland.