

Museum Partnership Report

Sharing Collections 2018/19

July 2021

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Museum Partnership Report - Sharing Collections

UK national museums hold some of the most important collections in the world. The national museums regularly loan objects from their collections, both those in storage and from their own displays. These loans and touring exhibitions allow people from across the UK and the world to access the national collection. The brand name of the national museums, or 'star' objects can drive interest, increasing local and out of town visitors and positively impact on local economies. By lending their collections, the national museums engage new audiences, impact on a wide range of social outcomes and support the development of the wider museum sector.

The Mendoza Review¹ (published in 2017) identified nine priorities for museums (such as adapting to today's funding environment, working internationally and contributing to placemaking and local priorities) and set out 27 recommendations for DCMS and its arm's-length bodies. It was published alongside the Strategic Review of DCMS-Sponsored Museums². Both reviews highlighted that the footprint, scale and impact of museum partnership activity are not well understood by the museum sector or the public. It was agreed that DCMS would conduct an annual survey and publish a report capturing the scale, variety and impact of the national museums' partnership activities - both for public benefit as well as research and development.

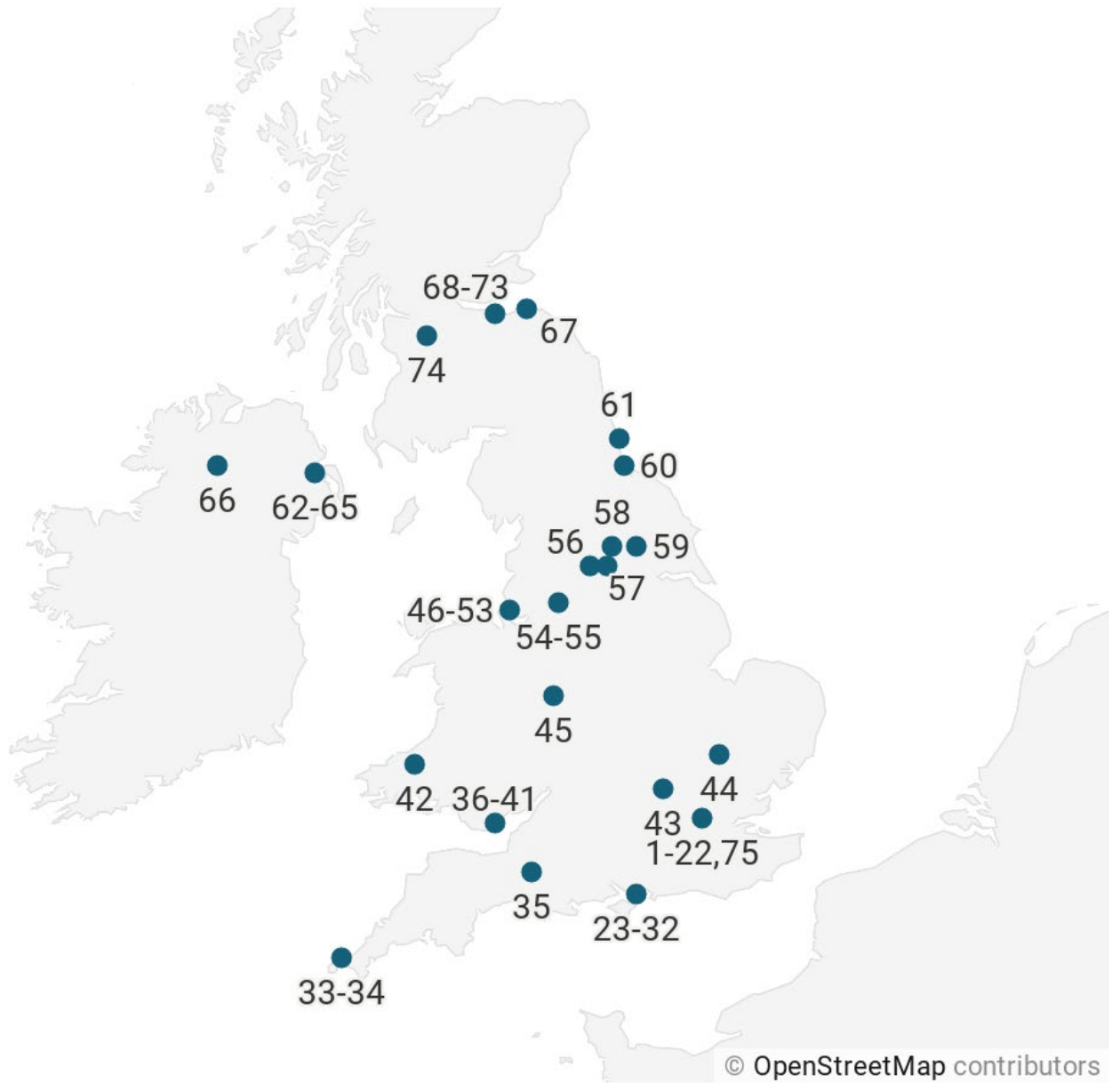
The first Museum Partnership Report (2017/18) was produced to collect and share better data and evidence of the impact of partnership activity. The report provided an overview of the national and international partnerships of 17 national museums in the UK covering 62 sites, revealing how museum partnerships benefit partners, audiences and wider society. The report examined partnership working through the sharing of collections and knowledge, and supporting audience engagement and social outcomes.

This second Museum Partnership Report focuses on sharing collections and includes 22 national museums, covering 75 sites and focuses on activity during the financial year 2018/2019. Data from The Horniman Museum and Gardens, the Sir John Soane Museum, National Museums Wales, The Wallace Collection and National Galleries Scotland is included in the 2018/19 report, which was unavailable in 2017/18.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-mendoza-review-an-independent-review-of-museums-in-england>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-review-of-dcms-sponsored-museums>

Figure 1: The 75 sites of the national museums included in this report ([click here to see an interactive map of sites](#))



Created with Datawrapper

British Library

- 1. British Library, London
- 58. British Library, Boston Spa

2. British Museum**Imperial War Museums**

- 3. Imperial War Museum, London
- 4. Churchill War Rooms
- 5. HMS Belfast
- 44. Imperial War Museum, Duxford
- 54. Imperial War Museum, North

6. National Gallery**8. National Portrait Gallery****21. Sir John Soane's Museum****22. Horniman Museum****Natural History Museum**

- 7. Natural History Museum, London
- 43. Natural History Museum at Tring

Royal Armouries

- 9. Royal Armouries, White Tower
- 23. Fort Nelson, Portsmouth
- 57. Royal Armouries, Leeds

Royal Museums Greenwich

- 10. National Maritime Museum
- 11. Queen's House
- 12. *Cutty Sark*
- 13. Royal Observatory, Greenwich

Science Museum Group

- 14. Science Museum, London
- 55. Science and Industry Museum, Manchester
- 56. National Science and Media Museum, Bradford
- 59. National Railway Museum, York
- 61. Locomotion, Shildon

Tate

- 15. Tate Modern
- 16. Tate Britain
- 33. Tate St Ives
- 34. Barbara Hepworth Museum and Gardens
- 53. Tate Liverpool

V&A

- 17. V&A
- 18. V&A Museum of Childhood

National Army Museum

19. National Army Museum

National Museum of the Royal Navy

24. HMS Victory
25. National Museum of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth
26. HMS Warrior
27. Action Stations
28. LCT 7074
29. National Marines Museum
30. HMS M.33
31. Royal Navy Submarine Museum
32. Explosion Museum of Firepower
35. Fleet Air Arm Museum
62. HMS Caroline

RAF Museum

20. RAF Museum, London
45. RAF Museum, Cosford

National Museums Liverpool

46. International Slavery Museum
47. Walker Art Gallery
48. World Museum
49. Lady Lever Art Gallery
50. Merseyside Maritime Museum
51. Sudley House
52. Museum of Liverpool

National Museums Scotland

67. National Museum of Flight
68. National Museum of Scotland
69. National War Museum
74. National Museum of Rural Life

National Museum Wales

36. National Museum Cardiff
37. St. Fagans National Museum of History
38. National Waterfront Museum
39. Big Pit National Coal Museum
40. National Slate Museum
41. National Roman Legion Museum
42. National Wool Museum

National Museums NI

63. Ulster Museum
64. Ulster Transport Museum
65. Ulster Folk Museum
66. Ulster American Folk Park

National Galleries Scotland

70. Scottish National Gallery
71. Modern One

72. Modern Two
73. Scottish National Portrait Gallery

75. Wallace Collection

In numerical order

1. British Library, London
2. British Museum
3. Imperial War Museum, London
4. Churchill War Museum
5. HMS Belfast
6. National Gallery
7. Natural History Museum, London
8. National Portrait Gallery
9. Royal Armouries, White Tower
10. National Maritime Museum
11. Queen's House
12. Cutty Sark
13. Royal Observatory, Greenwich
14. Science Museum
15. Tate Modern
16. Tate Britain
17. V&A
18. V&A Museum of Childhood
19. National Army Museum
20. RAF Museum, London
21. Sir John Soane's Museum
22. Horniman Museum
23. Fort Nelson, Portsmouth
24. HMS Victory
25. National Museum of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth
26. HMS Warrior
27. Action Stations
28. LCT 7074
29. National Marines Museum
30. HMS M.33
31. Royal Navy Submarine Museum
32. Explosion Museum of Firepower
33. Tate St Ives
34. Barbara Hepworth Museum and Gardens
35. Fleet Air Arm Museum
36. National Museum Cardiff
37. St. Fagans National Museum of History
38. National Waterfront Museum
39. Big Pit National Coal Museum
40. National Slate Museum
41. National Roman Legion Museum
42. National Wool Museum
43. Natural History Museum at Tring
44. Imperial War Museum, Duxford
45. RAF Museum, Cosford
46. International Slavery Museum
47. Walker Art Gallery

48. World Museum
49. Lady Lever Art Gallery
50. Merseyside Maritime Museum
51. Sudley House
52. Museum of Liverpool
53. Tate Liverpool
54. Imperial War Museum, North
55. Science + Industry Museum
56. National Science + Media Museum
57. Royal Armouries, Leeds
58. British Library, Boston Spa

59. National Railway Museum
60. National Museum of the Royal Navy, Hartlepool
61. Locomotion
62. HMS Caroline
63. Ulster Museum
64. Ulster Transport Museum
65. Ulster Folk Museum
66. Ulster American Folk Park
67. National Museum of Flight
68. National Museum of Scotland
69. National War Museum
70. Scottish National Gallery
71. Modern One
72. Modern Two
73. Scottish National Portrait Gallery
74. National Museum of Rural Life
75. Wallace Collection

Introduction

The national museums in the UK hold world-class collections, amounting to around 275 million objects³. Lending objects is a key way in which the national museums can increase public access to their collections both in the UK and internationally, in museums and elsewhere.

In 2018/19 the national museums had 68,049⁴ objects out on loan to 2,049 venues for display, which were seen by at least 32.8 million⁵ people.

A further 316,064 objects went on loan to 6,314 institutions for research purposes.

	2017/18 (17 museums surveyed)	2018/19 (22 museums surveyed)	Difference
No. of objects lent out by Nationals for display (UK + International, long and short term loans)	69,501	68,049	-2%
No. of venues that Nationals lent to for display (UK + International, long and short term loans) ⁶	2,110	2,049	-2.9%
No. of people that have seen loans out for display (UK + International)	32.9 million	32.8 million	-100,000
No. of objects lent out by Nationals for research (UK + International)	370,982	316,064	-14.8%
No. of institutions that Nationals lent to for research (UK + International)	6,777	6,314	-6.8%

Borrowing from the national collections allows museums across the UK, and the world, to stage exhibitions and displays that would not otherwise be possible, and enables them to

³ DCMS-sponsored Museums are estimated to hold 100 million objects, and the British Library holds at least 150 million items. The MOD-sponsored museums are estimated to hold 3 million objects. The national museums of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are estimated to hold 20.5 million objects.

⁴ Includes V&A loan of 38,000 objects to World of Wedgwood.

⁵ The national museums were able to report visitor numbers for 19% of their loans in 2018/19. Most of the remaining 81% relate to long term loans usually placed in permanent galleries, rather than exhibitions. The number of people who saw the national collection outside the national museums is therefore likely to be higher.

⁶ This is not unique venues. Total includes multiple loans to the same venue.

further contextualise their own collections. In 2018/19 additional national museums were surveyed, which will impact the comparison above as the 2018/19 data includes a larger number of national museums. The data shows that in 2018/19, although the total number of venues lent to was lower, the average number of objects per loan was slightly higher. As a number of national museums are currently in the process of moving their collections from a large shared storage facility to individual locations, many are not currently accepting loan requests, or have vastly reduced capacity, which has resulted in a lower number of overall loans for this year.⁷

As was demonstrated in the 2017/18 report, the national museums continue to benefit from high-profile inward loans for their own exhibitions from museums across the country including from the 152 collections held by non-national museums in England and 50 in Scotland that are designated as nationally significant.⁸ In 2018/19 there were 98 loans to national museums from independent museums and 57 from local authority museums. By placing their collections in new contexts, the national museums transform their understanding of them, accessing community-specific interpretations and co-curation opportunities. This activity is ultimately for the benefit of the public, who can encounter the national collection across the UK and around the world. Research has shown that continued participation in culture supports a range of social outcomes, including wellbeing,⁹ and there is increasing evidence that tours of national collections can bring significant economic benefits.

⁷ The V&A, Science Museum Group, and the British Museum have collections stored at Blythe House. They have received funding from Government in order to move their collections out into purpose-built storage.

⁸ [Designated Outstanding Collections \(ACE\)](#) in England and the [Recognised Collections](#) in Scotland

⁹ Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing 2017)

CASE STUDY

The Natural History Museum's Dippy on Tour in Birmingham Museums and National Museums NI (Ulster Museum).

Dippy's tour, supported by the Garfield Weston Foundation, continued to captivate visitors and bring huge benefits to local audiences and economies in two new regional venues throughout 2018-19. On the second leg of the Tour, Dippy was hosted at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. Over a quarter of a million people visited Dippy during its 15-week run making it the most successful temporary exhibition at BMAG for at least 20 years and reaching new (42%) and diverse audiences. In Birmingham City Centre, £4.2m is estimated to have been spent by Dippy visitors (with a Direct Economic Impact of £1.7m).

Dippy then moved to Ulster Museum where the stop became the highest grossing exhibition ever for the museum. There were 131,902 visitors, including 8,789 engaging through the formal education programme, and the display also achieved their highest number of visitors on a single day to an exhibition at 4,226. In addition, retail performance achieved an impressive 45.5% uplift over the same period in the previous year. £2.6m is estimated to have been spent by visitors on local businesses in Belfast during Dippy's stay.

Funding

As noted in the 2017/18 survey, lending and borrowing museum collections has significant costs attached. Grant-in-Aid provided by DCMS is increasingly supplemented by commercial income and donations, but investment in partnerships must compete for funding alongside the high fixed costs of running a museum (e.g. staff costs, buildings and collections management) and other activities. Nonetheless, National museums remain the biggest investors in lending and borrowing from their collections (through in-house resources), supported by some external funding opportunities through Arts Council England, National Lottery Heritage Fund and a broad range of trusts and foundations, such as the Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund. International touring exhibitions remain a source of income for some national museums though costs often remain high.

CASE STUDY

The Government Indemnity Scheme is an alternative to commercial insurance for works of art and cultural objects on display in the UK. It encourages the exhibition of items that may have otherwise been possible due to the cost of insurance. National Museums Scotland delivered a Government Indemnity Scheme workshop, organised in

partnership with Arts Council England as part of the National Training Programme, to help participants to develop their knowledge of the scheme and understand the standards required and how to meet them. The workshop was delivered at the National Museum of Scotland on 12 June and at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery on 13 June 2018. One participant at the Inverness event wrote: "Really nice to see that smaller organisations can benefit from the knowledge of the nationals."

1. Sharing collections in the UK

The national museums are committed to ensuring that people throughout the UK access the national collection in non-national institutions. They lent their collections to UK institutions through both short- and long term loans, totalling 1,406 loans of 61,533 objects to 681 individual venues in 2018/19. The survey results indicate that in the UK over 18.5million¹⁰ visitors saw the national collection outside of the national museums. Nonetheless, as this number mainly reflects short term loans for ticketed exhibitions and touring exhibitions, the actual figure is likely to be much higher. This is because it is not always possible to collect visitor numbers for long loans or for loans to unticketed displays. This is in addition to around 50 million visits to the national museums surveyed here themselves.¹¹

	2017/18 (17 museums surveyed)	2018/19 (22 museums surveyed)	Difference
Total number of loans out (long and short term)by nationals for display (UK)	1,474	1,406	-4.6%
Total number of objects loaned out by nationals for display (UK)	60,022	61,533	+2.5%
Total number of unique institutions/venues that objects were loaned out to by nationals for display (UK)	Over 900 ¹²	681	
How many people have seen the national collection on loan (UK only)	18,400,000	18,524, 858	+124,858

1.1 Short term loans UK

Short term loans are one-off loans that contribute to an exhibition or display organised by the borrowing institution. In 2018/19, 10,576 objects from the national museums' collections went on short term loan to 722¹³ institutions in the UK. Approximately 16%

¹⁰ This number mainly reflects short term loans and touring exhibitions as museums do not gather figures for long term loans, so the actual figure is likely to be much higher.

¹¹ Based on figures [published by ALVA](#) for 2019.

¹² A precise figure was not calculated in 2017/18

¹³ This figure includes institutions who received loans from more than one national in the reporting year - so is not unique venues.

were part of touring exhibitions. The national museums were able to provide visitor figure data for 56% of their UK short term loans, revealing that in 2018/19 at least 12 million people saw objects from the national collection on short term loan, including touring exhibitions.

	2017/18 (17 museums surveyed)	2018/19 (22 museums surveyed)	Difference
Total number of objects loaned out as short term loans by nationals for display (UK)	7,129	10,576	+48%
Total number of institutions/venues that objects were loaned out to as short term loans by nationals for display (UK)	652	722	+10.7%
Percentage of short term loans where visitor numbers were provided (UK)	43%	56%	+13%
Total number of people who have seen the national collection on short term loan (UK)	11,000,000	12,070,057	+1,070,057 (+0.1%)

The distribution of short term loans (Figure 2) shows that places with either a national museum or a large regional museum, often located in an urban area, are in receipt of the highest number of loans. The majority of short term loans are reactive, in that they meet requests from museums who wish to borrow for a specific purpose. The regional demand seems to come from the larger or more established museums which are more likely to have higher capacity to borrow, in terms of staff time, networks, resources, and physical assets such as display spaces and security. As with the 17/18 report the pattern displayed here therefore shows partnerships where capacity and desire to borrow is met with willingness to lend.

CASE STUDY

Tim Peake's Spacecraft Tour

Spring 2019 saw the end of a 20-month tour of Tim Peake's Spacecraft, part of the Science Museum Group's collection. The Soyuz spacecraft was seen by over 1.3 million people at venues in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, presented by Samsung and Science Museum Group.

Space Descent VR, the stunning virtual reality journey voiced by Tim Peake, accompanied the spacecraft on tour, enabling nearly 50,000 people to experience in first-person the high-speed descent to Earth from the International Space Station.

Although the increase in the number of venues that loans went to rose as expected when taking into account the additional museums included in this iteration of the survey, the increase in the number of objects on loan is still considerable. The work that goes into lending is not insignificant. Each item to be lent takes several hours to process depending on whether it needs to be conserved, photographed and appraised before being packed and crated ready to travel – therefore large quantities of loan items will require substantial work by the lender to prepare the loans.

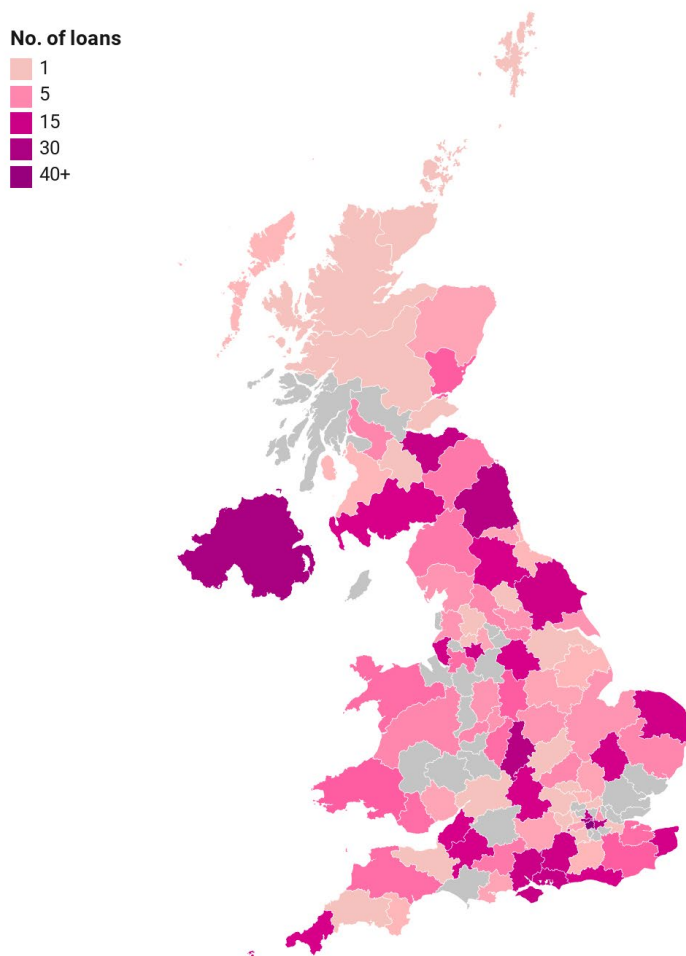
CASE STUDY

In 2018/19, the Horniman lent 133 objects to 8 venues in the UK as part of its Object in Focus programme, which supports small museums and cultural organisations to borrow objects from its collection to attract new audiences, and develop curatorial and collections management skills.¹⁴

¹⁴ <https://www.horniman.ac.uk/project/object-in-focus/>

Figure 2 - Distribution of short term loans throughout the UK in 2018/19, split by postal area. [Click here to see an interactive map which shows the percentage of loans to each UK postal area](#)

Distribution of Short Term Loans



Map data: © Open Door Logistics • Created with Datawrapper

1.2 UK partnership and touring exhibitions

The national museums have a number of exhibitions that are lent to or were developed in partnership with non-national museums in the UK. These may be developed from successful exhibitions the national museums have themselves staged and then wish to tour, or are one-off exhibitions created in partnership with the host museum and its collections. Visitor figures were available for 50% of partnership/touring exhibitions and showed that at least 3.5 million people visited during 2018/19.

In 2018/19, the national museums sent 59 different exhibitions to 118 venues in the UK.

In many cases, the number of exhibitions that the national museums are able to lend or tour in the UK is dependent on the funding available. ACE, especially through their Strategic Tour Fund, and NLHF fund much of this activity in England, and the Scottish Government has provided funding for major touring projects in Scotland. These exhibitions often showcase star objects and artists from the national collections that are well known throughout the UK, or enable collections with particular local resonances to be displayed. This was the case for the exhibition of the Wolsey Angels from the V&A Museum at both Christchurch Mansion in Ipswich and the New Walk Museum and Art Gallery in Leicester, where the exhibition explored Leicester's relationship with Cardinal Wolsey.

Many touring exhibitions are first displayed at the national museum itself, building recognition before going on tour. For example, Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography at the National Portrait Gallery then toured to the Millenium Gallery in Sheffield. These factors mean that museums hosting touring exhibitions experienced a number of positive impacts, including uplifts in visitor figures and increased income.

CASE STUDY

In an important year for Dundee, with the opening of the V&A Dundee, The McManus were a partner in the ARTIST ROOMS national programme, presenting the text work of American conceptual artist, Lawrence Weiner. In developing the exhibition, the team worked in close collaboration with the artist to produce new versions of Weiner's work in Scots with translator James Robertson, creating an exhibition unique to Dundee and Scotland.

The national museums also supported 23 exhibitions created and toured by non-national museums, through lending 344 objects to 69 venues of such tours.

1.3 Long term loans UK

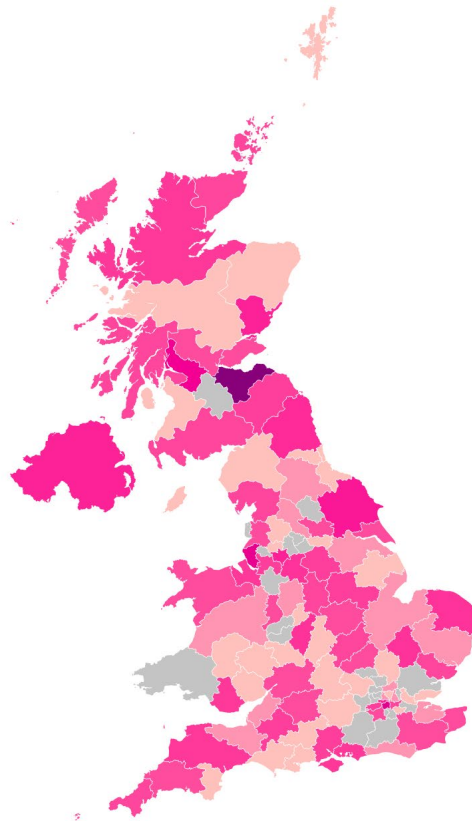
In the UK, 677 long term loans from the national museums, comprising at least 50,898 objects, were ongoing in 2018/19 on a long term basis (18 months or more). This figure includes the V&A Collection at World of Wedgwood totalling approximately 38,000 objects. The average length of long term loans reported in the survey was 18 years. The average long term loan length reported in 2017/18 was 15 years. Long term loans are usually placed on display in galleries in local and regional museums, and represent long term collaboration between the national museums and the wider museum sector.

	2017/18 (17 museums surveyed)	2018/19 (22 museums surveyed)	Difference
Total number of long term loans out in (UK)	818	677	-17.2%
Total number of objects loaned out as long term loans by nationals for display (UK)	52,891	50,898	-3.8%
Average length of loan in years of long term loan (UK)	15 years	18 years	+3 years (+20%)

Museums in Greater London received the highest number of long term loans (22 %) followed by Scotland (16.4%). The North West (13.3%) also received a high number of long term loans: the largest lender of these long term loans is National Museums Scotland, followed by National Museums Liverpool, and represents their work to create local partnerships with museums and galleries in their regions.

Figure 3 - Distribution of long term loans throughout the UK in 2018/19, split by postal area. [Click here to see an interactive map which shows the percentage of long term loans to each UK postal area.](#)

Distribution of Long Term Loans



Map data: © Open Door Logistics • Created with Datawrapper

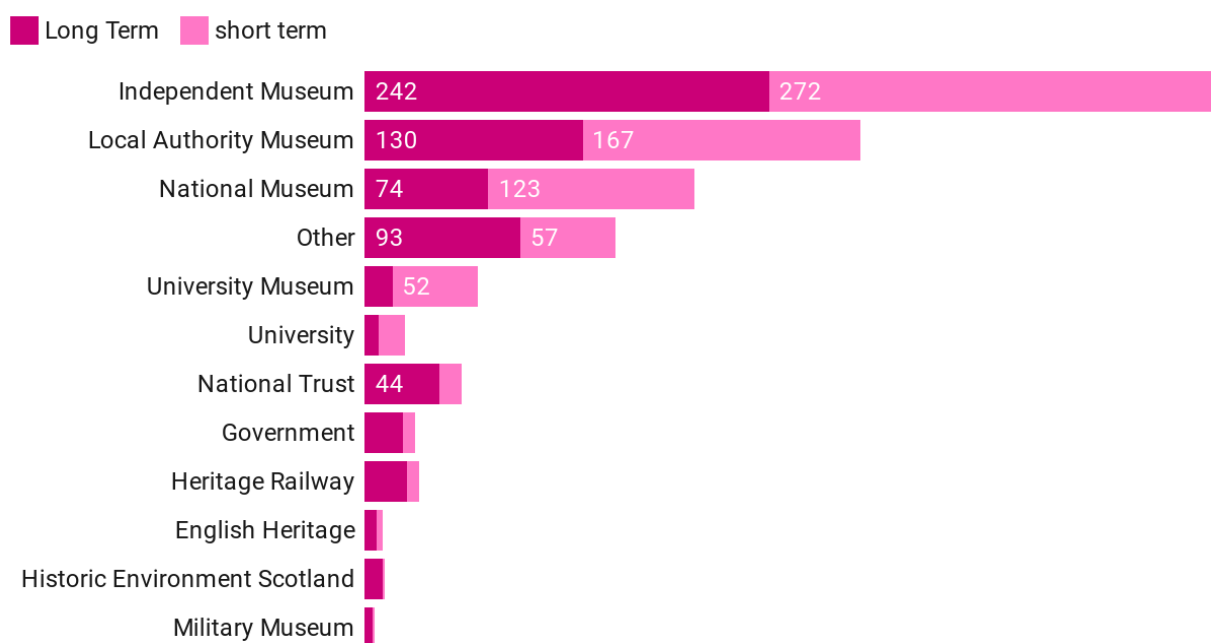
1.4 Who borrows from the national collection?

The national museums lend their collections to a range of museums and cultural organisations. Independent museums received the largest number of both short term (272) and long term (242) loans, followed by local authority museums, who received 167 short term loans and 130 long term loans (fig. 3). This is broadly similar to 2017/18 where independent museums borrowed the most, followed by local authority museums. This distribution reflects the make-up of the sector, with independent museums composing the largest subset of museums in the sector.¹⁵

Figure 4 -Type of borrowers.

[Click here to see a chart which shows the type of UK institution borrowing national museum objects on a short term and long term basis in 2018/19](#)

Type of UK Institutions borrowing on short-term and long-term basis



Other includes loans to Archives, Libraries, Botanic Gardens and Religious Institutions

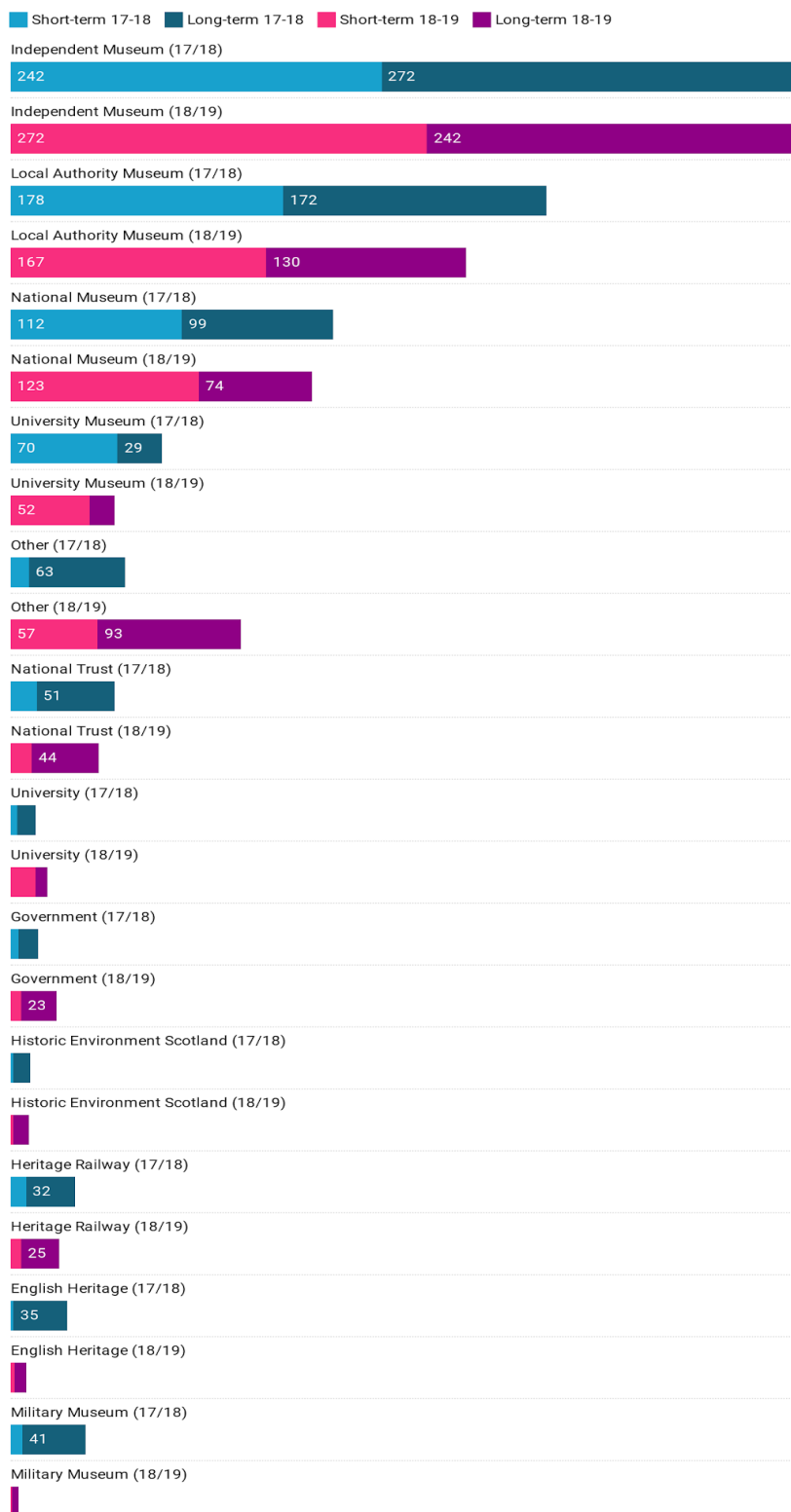
Created with Datawrapper

¹⁵ Independent museums now make up at least 71.5% of the total UK sector.
<http://museweb.dcs.bbk.ac.uk/static/pdf/MappingMuseumsReportMarch2020.pdf>

Figure 5 - Type of borrower - comparison to previous year.

[Click here to see a chart detailing the type of UK institution borrowing national museum objects on a short term and long term basis in 2018/19 in comparison to 2017/18](#)

Type of UK Institutions borrowing 2017/18 v 2018/19



Other includes loans to Archives, Libraries, Botanic Gardens and Religious Institutions
 Created with Datawrapper

2. Sharing collections internationally

Sharing collections internationally builds and maintains the national museums' reputations as world-leading institutions, but also drives economic growth and tourism, cultural diplomacy and cultural exchange. 48% of visitors to the national museums in England,¹⁶ 44% of visitors to the National Museum of Scotland, 10% of visitors to National Museum Wales and 22%¹⁷ of visitors to National Museums NI were from overseas. This is one way that the museums have developed a high level of brand recognition across the globe.

In 2018/19, the national museums sent 643 loans comprising 6,496 objects out on loan to a total of 41 countries on either a short- or long term basis, of which 404 were to European countries. Visitor numbers were available for 16% of their international loans: at least 14.2 million people saw national museums' objects outside the UK.

	2017/18 (17 museums)	2018/19 (22 museums)	Difference
Total number of loans out by nationals for display (international)	638	643	+0.7%
Total number of objects loaned out by nationals for display (international)	9,279	6,496	-32.4%
Total number of loans out by nationals for display (Europe)	381	404	+6%
No. of loans out where visitor numbers were provided (international)	30%	16%	-14%
How many people have seen the national collection on loan (international)	14.4 million	14.3 million	-100,000 (negligible)

The annual international spread of national museum loans is determined by a number of factors. As with the UK picture, most short term loans were 'reactive' in that they were requested by the borrowing institutions for inclusion in an exhibition or display. The picture of short term loans therefore displays primarily the countries where museums have actively sought a loan from a UK museum. International lending/borrowing tends to be more expensive than loans within the UK due to the higher transport costs, so the picture might also reflect those areas of the world that have the funding available to take international loans as well as the appropriate facilities and conditions to care for the object. In recognition

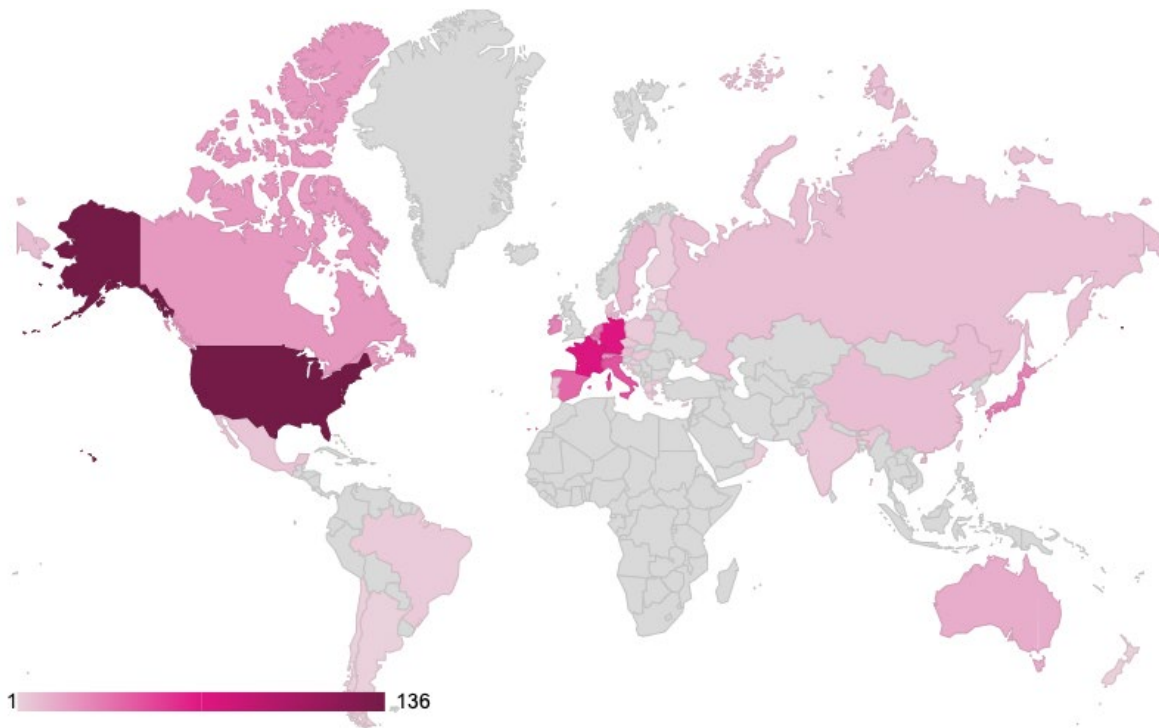
¹⁶ [Sponsored Museum and Galleries Annual Performance Indicators 2018/19](#)

¹⁷ 8% from the Republic of Ireland, 22% from overseas.

of this, the UK museum sector has initiated a number of programmes to help build the capacity in some of these regions, including the British Museum’s International Training Programme.

Figure 6 - The international spread of all international loans active in 2018/19.

[Click here to see the number of loans out received by each country in this interactive map.](#)



2.1 International short term loans

90% of international loans, including touring exhibitions, were sent on a short term basis, with 366 sent to European countries and 209 to the rest of the world.

	2017/18 (17 museums)	2018/19 (22 museums)	Difference
Total number of short term loans out for display (international)	524	575	+9.7%
Percentage of international loans out for display by Nationals that were short term loans	82%	90%	+8%
Total number of short term loans out for display (Europe)	338	366	+8.3%
Total number of short term loans out for display (non-Europe)	186	209	+12.4%

The majority of international short term loans went to the USA (22%), followed by western European countries where France (11.8%) and Germany (11.3%) were in receipt of the highest number of loans.

In 2018/19, 3.9 million visitors saw objects from the national museums in the USA, 1.9 million in France, 1.6 million in Japan, and over 648,000 in Germany.

2.2 International touring exhibitions

The national museums toured 36 exhibitions to 73 international venues in 2018/19, and these were seen by at least 1.9 million people.¹⁸ Some of these exhibitions consist entirely of works from the national collections and are developed and curated in-house, including in collaboration with one another and non-national museums, specifically to be toured internationally.

¹⁸ National museums were able to provide visitor figures for 27% of their international touring exhibition loans, so this figure is likely to be much higher.

CASE STUDY

In 2018/19 the Natural History Museum's Treasures of the Natural World went to Taipei, which was the first time they had taken an exhibition to Taiwan. The exhibition attracted 146,000 visitors over its 10 week run. The Director of Events at the hosting company said "It's the first time we saw such a positive response from schools about a temporary exhibition."

The USA hosted the highest number of UK national museum touring exhibitions (18), followed by Japan (8) and France and China (6 each).

The national museums also lent objects to successful international touring exhibitions organised by non-UK museums - this involved loans of 819 objects to 58 touring exhibitions at 121 venues.

The national museums' international activity contributes to the UK's soft power standing and cultural diplomacy. For example, some international short term loans from the national collections support the GREAT Britain Campaign, UK Government's flagship promotional campaign to encourage people to visit, do business, invest and study in the UK.

2.3 International long term loans

Long term loans (18 months or more) accounted for 9.6% of the national museums' international lending. In 2018/19 the museums had 62 long term loans in place consisting of 303 objects. Long term loans often represent long term partnerships, through which museums can build deep and mutually beneficial international relationships. The majority (16%) of international long loans were to the USA, followed by Belgium (11.3%). Australia received the third highest number of international long loans.

	2017/18 (17 museums)	2018/19 (22 museums)	Difference
Total number of long term loans out for display (international)	97	62	-36%
Percentage of international loans out for display by Nationals that were long term loans	18%	9.6%	-11.5%
Total number of objects lent out internationally for long term display	993	303	-69%

3. Sharing collections for research

National museums hold exceptional collections and are international centres of collections-focused scholarship. UKRI have highlighted the specific value of Museum collections to the UK's research infrastructure and Museum staff are frequently recognised experts in their own field. For example, the staff at the Natural History Museum published around 700 scientific papers a year with international collaborators¹⁹. The National Gallery is a pre-eminent centre for the research of European painting from the 13th to the early 20th centuries. Museums are a key element of research infrastructure for the arts and humanities in the UK. They are also key institutions in heritage science, conservation and materials science, and many museums are at the forefront of developing new technologies to aid collections-based research and beyond. Many of the National Museums regularly loan their collections for use in academic research, for example the Natural History Museum and National Museums Liverpool. These specimens and objects inform cutting-edge scientific research in a wide range of disciplines.

In total 6,314 loans were active in 2018/19 for research purposes, comprising at least 316,064 objects.

	2017/18 (17 museums)	2018/19 (22 museums)	Difference
Total number of loans out by nationals for research	6,316	6,314	-0.03%
Total number of objects loaned out by nationals for research	315,915	316,064	+0.05%

The majority of research loans in 2018/19 were international (6,125), primarily to universities and other research organisations. National museums also received over 1,773 research loans, demonstrating their own important academic research functions.

¹⁹ [Click here to see further information on the NHM's Science outputs](#)

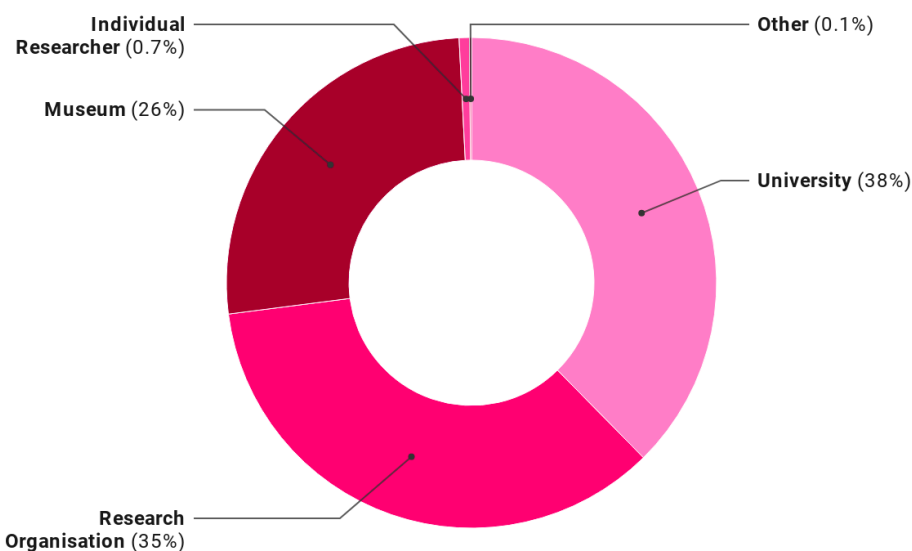
CASE STUDY

National Museums Scotland loaned 56 muscle tissue samples to Dr Christian Roos of the German Primate Center as part of the Primate Species Conservation Initiative to generate whole genome sequences of the world's primates, More than 60% of primate species are threatened with extinction and yet whole genome sequences are lacking for most species. These sequences allow a better understanding of the evolution, population dynamics, and genetic diversity of primate species, which provide important information for the conservation of primate species.

Figure 7 - Type of institution in receipt of research loans.

[Click here to see a chart which shows the type of institutions in receipt of national museum research loans in 2018/19 \(UK and International\)](#)

Type of institution in receipt of research loans



Created with Datawrapper

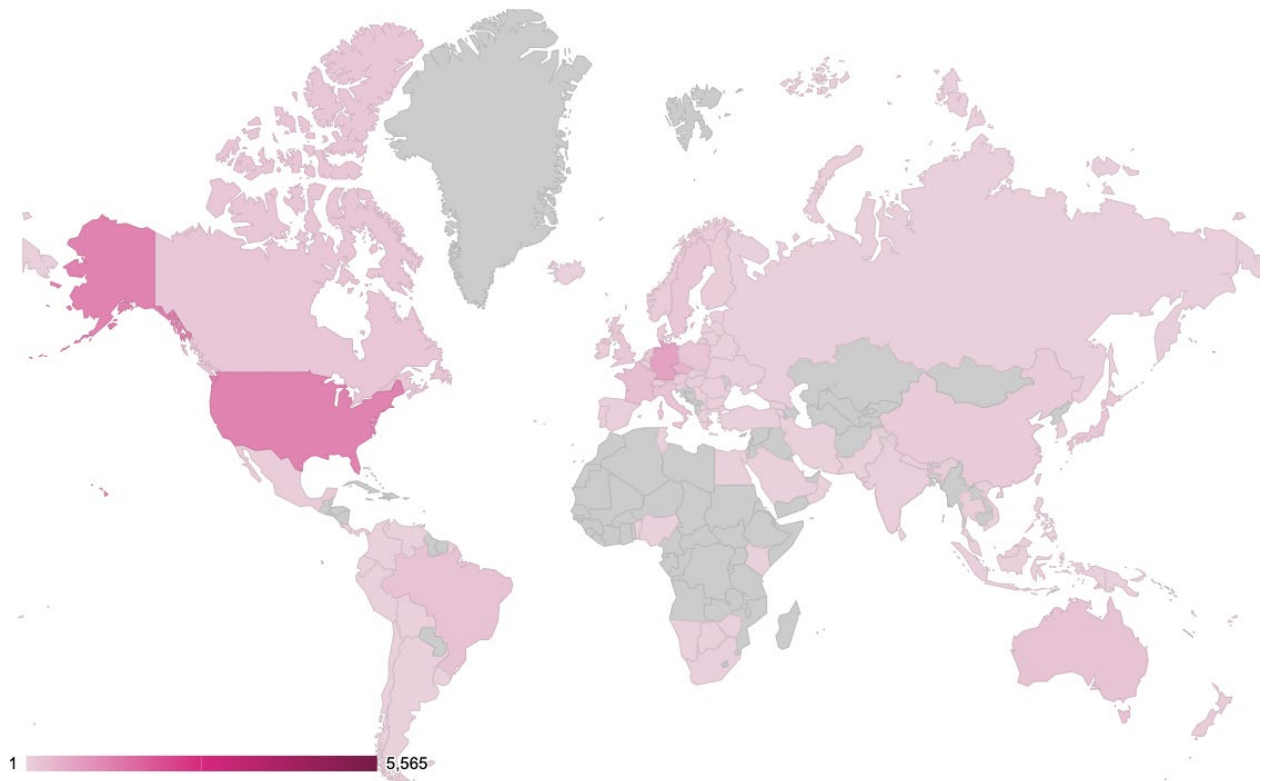
The national museums sent research loans across the world, demonstrating the extensive network of relationships and partnerships their scientists and curators have with the global research community. As seen in 2017/18 the majority of the loans were made to institutions based in the USA (20.3%), followed by Germany (12.3%), and the Czech Republic (7.5%). Research loans were sent to a total of 88 countries in 2018/19.

Research loans tend to have a wider global distribution compared to those lent for display purposes, with more loans going to, for example, South American (321 loans of 12,373 objects) and African countries (113 loans of 5,910 objects). This suggests that some regions that may not have the capacity to support loans for display do have the capacity in their university and research infrastructure to borrow internationally. This may be due to a

number of reasons, including that research loans are likely to be cheaper - they are often small specimens rather than large artworks or objects and do not have the associated exhibition display costs, such as display cases and interpretation.

Figure 8 - International spread of research loans.

[Click here to see a map showing the international spread of all international research loans active in 2018/19.](#)



4. Supporting new collections and acquisitions

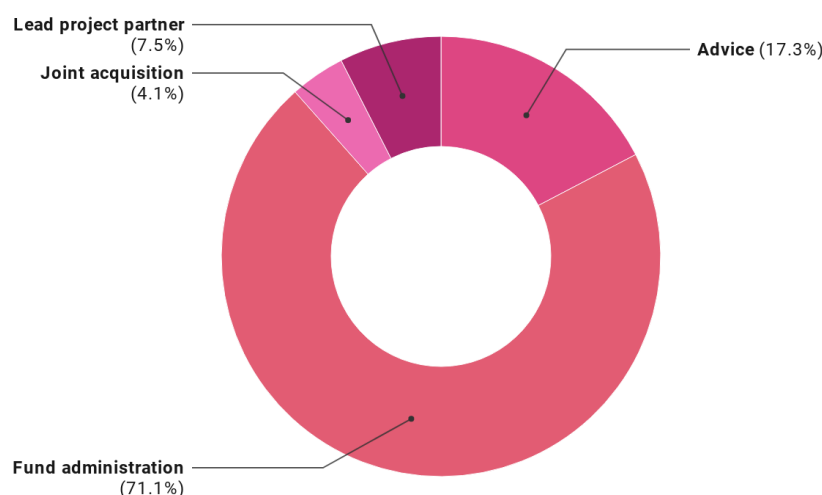
The national museums continue to support other UK museums to acquire objects. This support enabled 173 acquisitions at 122 organisations across the UK. 71.1% of instances of support took the form of administering acquisition funds, 4.1% through joint acquisitions, and 17.3% was general informal advice on acquiring. In 2017/18 70.8% of instances of support took the form of administering acquisition funds, 24.9% through joint acquisitions, and 3.7% was general advice on acquiring.

	2017/18 (17 museums)	2018/19 (22 museums)
Number of acquisitions	462	173
Number of organisations in UK receiving acquisition support	205	122

93.1% of the acquisitions supported were made by museums outside of London.

Figure 9 -Type of acquisition support

[Click here to see a chart which shows the type of acquisition support provided by the national museum in 2018/19.](#)



National Museums Scotland manages the National Fund for Acquisitions (NFA), an annual grant of £150,000 provided by the Scottish Government to help museums throughout Scotland to acquire objects for their collections. In 2018/19 the NFA made 58 payments

totalling £141,781 to 26 organisations. This included payment of grants which had been offered but not yet claimed at the end of the previous financial year. At 31 March 2019, a further 16 grants with a total value of £31,175 had been committed but not yet paid. The total purchase value of the objects to which the Fund contributed was £520,282.

The V&A administers the Arts Council England/V&A Purchase Grant Fund which provides funding towards acquiring objects into the permanent collections of non-national museums in England and Wales. In 2018/19 the fund awarded £528,084 to support 65 acquisitions worth around £3 million across 52 organisations. The funding year for the fund runs from 1 July-30 June. In the funding year the Fund paid grants totalling £721,217 towards 94 purchases by 65 organisations. Total cost of acquisitions supported was £2,311,273. It is noteworthy that the V&A Purchase Grant Fund did not operate between 30 March 2018 and 12 September 2018. This meant that fewer grants were considered between September 2018 to March 2019. Grant levels were back to normal by the end of the funding year, but the timing may explain the drop in overall acquisitions during the 2018/19 financial year.

As reported in the 2017/18 report, the Treasure process and the Portable Antiquities Scheme²⁰ run through the British Museum supported the acquisition of 281 objects by 105 museums in England and Wales. There is a time lag on treasure acquisitions data as monitoring is based on the year that the object is found rather than when the museum acquires it. So data for 2018/19 will not be available until 2021.

In Scotland, from April 2018 to March 2019, Treasure Trove Unit staff recorded 905 chance finds in total. 186 claimed cases (including chance finds and excavation assemblages) were allocated to accredited museums in Scotland.

²⁰ Supported by funding from DCMS

5. Borrowing collections

The sharing of collections is not a one-way process from the national museums out to the rest of the sector: national museums also borrow from the extensive collections of non-national museums across the UK, and other museums internationally. This allows the national museums to present their own collections in new ways and explore themes where their own collections are not sufficient. Lending objects and artworks to national museums can extend the reach of non-national museums' collections, enabling them to engage new audiences and build their public reputation.

In total the national museums borrowed 11,735 objects from 498 institutions. The national museums also borrowed 699 objects for research purposes.

	2017/18 (17 museums)	2018/19 (22 museums)	Difference
Number of objects borrowed by Nationals (UK + international)	11,524	11,735	+1.8%
Number of institutions that Nationals borrowed from (UK + international)	1,385	1,199	-13.4%
Number of objects borrowed by Nationals for research (international)	6,122	46	-99.2%
Number of international museums that Nationals borrowed from for research	232	7	-225 (-97%)
Number of countries that Nationals borrowed from for research	10	5	-5 (-50%)

5.1 Borrowing from UK-based organisations

Around 57% of institutions that lent to the national museums were based in the UK, who contributed over 7,928 objects to national museums' exhibitions and displays. Around half of incoming loans were from outside the public museum and heritage sector: 16.1% were from private lenders, including borrowing directly from artists and from private collections.

Other non-museum organisations that lent to the national museums include universities (5.6%), religious organisations (1.5%) and hospitals (0.3%).

National museum to national museum lending accounted for 18.3% of borrowing activity within the sector. Loans from independent museums made up 13.9% of the national museums' incoming loans, local authority museum loans made up 8.2%, and university museum loans accounted for 3.9%.

As a number of museums were unable to provide information about where they borrow from as a large proportion are from individual private lenders without location information, mapping this data only provides a partial and unrepresentative picture. The available data does suggest that London has the highest density of lenders to the national museums - usually one another.

5.2 Borrowing from international organisations

The national museums also borrow from global collections, providing access to world class art and objects for UK audiences. 513 lenders across the world provided 3,807 objects to the national museums. Although the survey did not result in complete country data for all borrowed works, the information returned showed that the majority came from the USA, followed by Germany and Russia.

CASE STUDY

Kizuna: Japan | Wales | Design was Amgueddfa Cymru's major exhibition for the 2018/19 (National Museum Cardiff, 16 June – 9 September 2018), produced in partnership with the Japanese Government's Agency for Cultural Affairs, the National Museum of Japanese History, Tokyo National Museum, and the National Museum of Modern Art Tokyo. This was a one-off international exhibition featuring important loans from each of these national collections which came to Wales for the first time as well as Japanese collections from across Wales. The twelve week exhibition attracted 58,535 visitors against an ambitious target of 40,000, including a visit from the Prince of Wales.

Conclusion

In this second year of partnership reporting, it is clear that museums continue to widely share collections within the UK and Internationally. More museums have been surveyed this year than in 2017/18 which impacts on direct comparison with the previous year. However future iterations of this report should enable direct comparison year on year.

It is too early to confirm any trends in lending/ borrowing but early signs indicate that there is not a great variation year on year in the geographical spread of loans. Internationally, the majority of loans go to Western Europe and the USA and within the UK, the majority go to areas with a high density of museums or a large regional museum. As indicated in the report, this is likely to largely relate to resource and desire/willingness to lend and borrow. It may also indicate that lending is likely to be concentrated where existing partnerships and relationships are already well established.

This report focuses on sharing collections. However, partnership work in museums is far broader, as the first report set out, and the intention is for future reports to highlight other areas of partnership activity.

Appendix 1: List of images

Figure 1: The 75 sites of the national museums included in this report

Figure 2 - Distribution of short term loans throughout the UK in 2018/19, split by postal area.

Figure 3 - Distribution of long term loans throughout the UK in 2018/19, split by postal area.

Figure 4 -Type of borrowers.

Figure 5 - Type of borrower - comparison to previous year.

Figure 6 - The international spread of all international loans active in 2018/19.

Figure 7 - Type of institution in receipt of research loans.

Figure 8 - International spread of research loans.

Figure 9 -Type of acquisition support

Appendix 2: The Survey

The survey was sent in the format of a spreadsheet template to ensure as much consistency as possible between the different museums' returns, while also providing some flexibility to account for the very different nature of the activity carried out by the museums.

The final questions were:

1: Loans

Please list venues that you have loaned collections to and from between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019

2: Acquisitions

Please list any acquisitions made by other museums and institutions that you have supported between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019

Appendix 3: Useful links

British Library

<https://www.bl.uk/about-us/governance/policies/borrowing-for-exhibitions>

<https://www.bl.uk/touring-exhibition-hire>

British Museum

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/our-work/how-borrow-british-museum-objects>

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/our-work/international/international-touring-exhibitions>

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/our-work/national/uk-touring-exhibitions-and-loans>

<https://www.britishmuseum.org/our-work/national/treasure-and-portable-antiquities-scheme>

Imperial War Museums

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/managing/loans>

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/partnerships>

National Gallery

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/about-us/the-gallery-nationwide/borrowing-from-the-national-gallery-a-guide>

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/about-us/organisation/policies/loans-out-policy>

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/about-us/the-gallery-nationwide>

National Portrait Gallery

<https://www.npg.org.uk/beyond/nationalprogrammes.php>

<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/loans/>

Sir John Soane's Museum

<https://www.soane.org/collections>

<https://www.soane.org/about/governance-and-management>

Horniman Museum

<https://www.horniman.ac.uk/explore-the-collections/about-the-collections/loans/>

<https://www.horniman.ac.uk/projects/>

Natural History Museum

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/our-science/collections/accessing-collections/loans.html>

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/about-us/national-impact.html>

Royal Armouries

<https://royalarmouries.org/collection-management/loans/>

Royal Museums Greenwich

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/borrowing-our-collections>

<https://www.rmg.co.uk/about-us/international-touring-activities>

Science Museum Group

<https://www.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/our-services/object-loans/>

<https://www.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/our-services/partner-with-us/touring-exhibitions/>

<https://www.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/our-work/projects-and-partnerships/>

Tate

<https://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/collection#loans>

<https://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/national-international-local>

<https://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/national-international-local/plus-tate>

V&A

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/loans>

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/exhibitions-for-hire>

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/va-international>

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/info/the-ace-va-purchase-grant-fund>

National Army Museum

<https://www.nam.ac.uk/borrowing-national-army-museum>

National Museum of the Royal Navy

<https://www.nmrn.org.uk/exhibitions-projects>

RAF Museum

<https://www.rafmuseum.org.uk/research/default/loans/>

National Museums Liverpool

<https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/touring-exhibitions/touring-exhibitions-and-loans>

<https://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/about/partnerships>

National Museums Scotland

<https://www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/services-and-expertise/loans/>

<https://www.nms.ac.uk/national-international/sharing-collections/touring-and-lending/>

<https://www.nms.ac.uk/national-international/national-programme-2021-2025/>

<https://www.nms.ac.uk/about-us/services-and-expertise/national-fund-for-acquisitions/>

National Museum Wales

<https://museum.wales/curatorial/art/loans/>

<https://museum.wales/donate/international/>

<https://museum.wales/portable-antiquities-scheme-in-wales/>

National Museums NI

<https://www.nmni.com/collections/Loans-touring-exhibitions.aspx>

<https://www.nmni.com/collections/Research.aspx>

National Galleries Scotland

<https://www.nationalgalleries.org/about-us/collections-management>

https://www.nationalgalleries.org/sites/default/files/features/pdfs/Strategic%20Plan%202019-23_0.pdf

Wallace Collection

https://www.wallacecollection.org/documents/183/TWC_Loans_Out_Policy.pdf