

About MGS

Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) is the national development body for Scotland's museum sector. We support 455 museums and galleries through strategic investment, advice, workforce development, and advocacy.

About the MA

The Museums Association (MA) is a dynamic membership organisation representing and supporting museums and people who work with them throughout the UK. Our network includes over 11,000 individual members working in all types of roles, from directors to trainees, and we represent more than 1,500 institutional members ranging from small volunteer run local museums to large national institutions. The MA campaigns for socially engaged museums and a representative workforce. We work ethically and sustainably and collaborate with partners where we have common aims and values.

Response

Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) the Museums Association (MA), on behalf of Scotland's museums sector, believe that the new guidance is good and poses relatively few concerns. We would request further guidance on future scope 3 calculation advice, particularly around digital. We would also encourage further guidance in future around inseting and offsetting as the current approved schemes have very limited credits available in Scotland.

We have some concerns around the capacity of museums to deliver the climate duties, particularly with no additional funding. Museums are facing severe financial pressures so may struggle to deliver additional duties.

The document contains a lot of very useful information but it is unlikely that museum professionals will have time to read and understand everything in the document. We suggest providing a short document with key points would be more effective in communicating what is expected of public sector organisations.

We would welcome clearer guidance, conversion factors and incentives for green energy. For example, MGS' electricity tariff is 100% guaranteed solar & wind with 100% gas being green biomethane (anaerobic breakdown of grass cuttings). Currently electricity must be reported as grid average and gas as 'natural gas' as guidance recommends location-based reporting. Whilst we can explain this in our larger reports, museums simply submitting a number have no real incentive to pay more for green tariffs.

It would be useful if the Scottish Government could provide training for staff at public sector organisations about what their organisation's climate duties are. This training needs to be available to everyone in the organisation including front of house staff who may find it harder to attend training due to the need to welcome visitors and manage the day-to-day running of the museum.

The MA provides an [online training course](#) to members that supports museum professionals to understand how museums can take action on climate. We also share best practice on climate justice at our events and in Museums Journal. One example is our [in-practice guide on sustainable procurement](#) that encourages museums to harness their buying power to champion sustainability and social responsibility.

MGS have run Carbon Literacy Training for museums since 2020 and are currently developing a new in person training course, including optional online modules and group follow ups, focusing on the Climate and Nature Crises. This course will allow museums to build climate resilience, mitigation and adaptation into their existing organisational plans, reporting and public engagement.

Museums have a vital role to play in raising awareness about the climate crisis and activating communities to create change.

The MA's [climate justice campaign](#) empowers museums to be bold and brave in taking action, putting forward a systems change approach which focuses on climate and social justice. The campaign supports museums in tackling the climate and ecological crisis through sharing good practice and resources.

Climate action forms a key component of the work of MGS and the [National Strategy for Scotland's museums and galleries](#). The culture and heritage sector has a crucial role to play in building a more environmentally sustainable future; it is MGS' intention to help turn this potential and ambition into real change.

Strategic investment in de-carbonising, retrofitting, and future-proofing museums and galleries is urgently needed. Many museums now face daily battles against leaks, crumbling buildings, and creaking infrastructure. There is a huge backlog in repairs and maintenance and urgent investment is needed to resolve these issues as museums do not have the budget to fund this essential work. Support is needed to adapt these buildings so that they meet net zero requirements. If no action is taken, there is a risk that historically significant buildings could fall into disrepair. There has already been an instance of a council proposing to transfer a building that houses a museum collection to community ownership because it is expensive to run and does not meet net zero requirements. While community asset transfer can be positive, in this instance, it posed

a risk to the collections that were stored in the building. Community asset transfer also does not address the issue of buildings being energy inefficient. If sufficient investment is not provided then it is possible we will see more instances of public sector organisations trying to get rid of buildings they are responsible for rather than repairing and adapting them.

Museums are uniquely positioned to share stories that raise awareness and understanding around the climate crisis and encourage audiences to take action. Museums can also illustrate the links between climate impacts and other issues such as health and wellbeing. For example, “[Design HOPES](#)” at the V&A Dundee was an exhibition that explored the idea of the climate emergency as a health emergency and looked at design as a tool to address the climate crisis.

There is potential for museums to play a role in helping people to understand future climate change scenarios if we do not take action and positive outcomes if we do take action. The University of St Andrew’s Wardlaw Museum “[Rewrite the Future](#)” exhibition opens on 31 May and will communicate to visitors how the decisions they make today can impact society and create a more sustainable future.

Museums can also highlight examples of loss and damage caused by the climate crisis in Scotland and internationally. There is an opportunity for museums to work in partnership with museums and communities in the global south to share these stories and possible solutions. The exhibition “[Waters Rising](#)” at Perth Museum looked at the threat of the global climate emergency whilst examining the impact of flooding and extreme weather events on communities in Perth and Kinross. The exhibition featured stories and objects connected to flooding from Scotland and abroad.

Museums are doing good work to embed climate action such as through transition to green energy or using their green spaces to increase biodiversity. MGS has published a [blog post](#) highlighting examples of museums embracing renewable energy solutions including Grampian Transport Museum in Aberdeenshire which gets its energy from photovoltaic (PV) solar panels, which convert light—not heat—into electricity and Gairloch Museum which has taken the approach of selling unused electricity generated to the National Grid, creating an additional income stream for their organisation. MGS has also published a [case study](#) about Stirling Smith Museum’s biodiversity community garden that provides a habitat and a source of food for wildlife. Both [MGS](#) and the [MA](#) regularly publish climate case studies to share best practice and inspire more museums to take action.