

# Cultural Heritage

**Conservation preserves cultural heritage, facilitating public access and enjoyment and enabling cultural heritage to maximise its economic and social value.**

## The Message

- Conservation physically saves cultural heritage, allowing for items to be displayed, researched and used.
- Conservation protects the values and significance of cultural heritage.
- Conservation helps us to understand our cultural heritage by increasing knowledge of its physical and intangible characteristics.
- Preserving the full breadth of heritage – including artworks, architecture, archaeology and ranging from the built environment to collections – requires a unique and diverse set of skills and specialisms.

## The Evidence

Cultural heritage is vulnerable to a range of threats and harmful agencies. 1

Conservators protect and treat the tangible characteristics of cultural heritage using their expert hands-on technical and decision-making skills, to mitigate and reduce these harms. 2

Decisions about treatments and interventions are based on an assessment of cultural heritage, including its significance and cultural, historic and spiritual contexts. 3

Conservation is based on comprehensive research into materials, deterioration causes, interventions, treatments, cultural significance, history and social values. 4

Conservators disseminate knowledge acquired through their work to lay and expert audiences. 5

The UK conservation sector possesses skills across specialisms, including in book and paper, metals, ceramics, glass, and time-based media. 6

The many aspects of conservation include investigation, documentation, preventive care, remedial treatment, packaging, display, cleaning, repair and restoration. 7



## The Objective

### We will

- Advocate the importance of professional conservation skills to preserving our shared cultural heritage.
- Collaborate with the cultural heritage sector to ensure conservation is included within the wider heritage debate and represented within collective messaging.
- Promote the diversity of heritage and drive parity between moveable cultural heritage and the historic environment.

### We urge decision makers to

- Recognise the interconnections between cultural heritage and conservation by explicitly including conservation within heritage debates, strategies and policies.
- Celebrate the diversity of heritage by committing equal support for built and moveable heritage in strategies and policies.



## The Evidence

1. [https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Ten\\_Agents\\_of\\_Deterioration](https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Ten_Agents_of_Deterioration)
2. [www.icon.org.uk](http://www.icon.org.uk)
3. Icon's Professional Standards: <https://icon.org.uk/system/files/documents/professional-standards-2016.pdf>
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Aitchison, K., 2013. Conservation Labour Market Intelligence. Icon.  
[https://icon.org.uk/system/files/documents/conservation\\_labour\\_market\\_intelligence\\_2012-13\\_0\\_0.pdf](https://icon.org.uk/system/files/documents/conservation_labour_market_intelligence_2012-13_0_0.pdf)
7. [www.icon.org.uk](http://www.icon.org.uk)