

The Economy, Business and Industry

Conservation is a source of economic prosperity and growth, contributing to business, industry and employment. It is a highly interconnected sector with multiple economic activities dependent and embedded within it.

The Message

- Conservation is a source of economic prosperity, providing services and goods and contributing to national GDP.
- Conservation contributes to national employment by creating jobs.
- Conservation contributes to varied and dispersed employment, distributing the value of skills, jobs, investment and innovation across sectors and the UK.
- Conservation fosters a diverse business environment through its division of employment between medium, small and micro-sized businesses. Businesses led by Icon accredited conservators can be sourced using the Conservation Register.
- Conservation supports local business and investment by preserving heritage assets that act as important “pull” factors to places and catalysts for economic revival.
- By preserving and enabling access to heritage, conservation maximises the economic value of industries like tourism, the creative industries and the cultural sector.

The Evidence

The cultural heritage sector, of which conservation is a part, has a total GVA of £29 bn (= 2% of national GVA). ¹

Heritage directly provides 196,000 jobs, employing 11,000 conservation professionals. Moveable heritage conservation employs 4,250 people. ²

Conservation is spread across the public, private and civil society sectors. Most employers are in London and South-West England but conservators work across UK nations and regions. ³

84% of conservation workplaces have five or fewer conservators. ⁴

Small businesses are vital to the economic wellbeing and social fabric of places. ⁵

The density of heritage assets is positively related to the concentration of firms in a local economy and the overall movement of businesses into an area. ⁶

Heritage generates £16.9 bn through visits and trips in England alone. ⁷

The better performance of the creative industries has been linked to a greater density of heritage assets. ⁸



The Objective

We will

- Advocate the value of conservation to the economy, business and industry.
- Foster understanding of the interconnected nature of conservation and how it enables industries to maximise their value.
- Raise awareness of the Conservation Register as an effective resource for finding businesses providing conservation services.
- Research and investigate the conservation workforce to understand its composition and economic contribution.

We urge decision makers to

- Champion the cultural heritage and conservation industry nationally and internationally.
- Protect vital National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England and Arts Council funding for cultural heritage.
- Attract more investment in conservation to increase sector productivity and stimulate growth.



The Evidence

1. Historic England, 2018. Heritage and the Economy 2018. Available online at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/content/heritage-counts/pub/2018/heritage-and-the-economy-2018/>
2. Ibid.
3. Aitchison, 2013.
4. Ibid.
5. Nesta, 2017. The State of Small Business. Available online at: <https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/the-state-of-small-business-uk.pdf>
6. Trends Business Research Ltd, NEF Consulting Ltd and Middlesex University, 2016. The role of culture, sport and heritage in place shaping. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-role-of-culture-sport-and-heritage-in-place-shaping>
7. Historic England, 2018. Heritage and the Economy.
8. Trends, Business Research Ltd, 2016.