Statistical report: Museum Accreditation

January 2023 meeting update

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020, museums across the UK closed their sites because of the impact of the pandemic and in line with Government guidance. In response, the UK Accreditation partners – Arts Council England; Museums Galleries Scotland, Northern Ireland Museums Council, and the Welsh Government (Museums Archives Libraries Division) – paused the Accreditation Scheme with effect from 1 April 2020.

In England, the scheme partially re-opened at the end of April 2021 for Provisional reviews and new applications. In October 2021 the scheme was re-opened for Return submissions from those who's applications were in progress at the time of the pause.

From October 2021, the scheme was open to:

- New applicants
- Museums holding a Provisional award
- Museums holding a Full Accreditation award who had already submitted their return.

This report provides further detail on panel meetings at nation, governance, and accreditation status between 2022 and 2023. Older reports can be accessed on Arts Council England website. These series of reports are published as an Official Statistic by Arts Council England.

This report summarises data about the Museums Accreditation Scheme (the scheme) between February 2022 and January 2023.

About the Museum Accreditation Scheme

The Museum Accreditation Scheme is the UK industry standard for museums and galleries. It tells everyone involved with a museum that they're doing the right things to help people to engage with collections and protect them for the future. The Museum Accreditation Scheme does this by making sure museums manage their collections properly, engage with visitors, and are governed appropriately. The scheme works for museums of all sizes: from the smallest volunteer-run museums to national museums.

Management of the Accreditation Scheme for museums and galleries in the UK was transferred to Arts Council England on 1 October 2011. It was previously administered by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council. Arts Council England works in partnership with Museums Galleries Scotland, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Museums Council to deliver the scheme. A revised Accreditation Standard was published on 3 October 2011, developed through consultation with stakeholders and the museum community. A further review of the Accreditation Standard took place during 2017 and 2018, with the latest Standard being published on 1 November 2018. You can find out more about the new standard here: https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/accreditation-scheme/support-and-advice#section-3

An overview of the Scheme

Museums in the Scheme

Figure 1: Over the last year there has been an increase in the number of museums that hold Full Accreditation, alongside an overall increase in numbers of museums in the Scheme.

	24/02/2022	26/01/2023
Provisional	152	97
Full	1584	1639
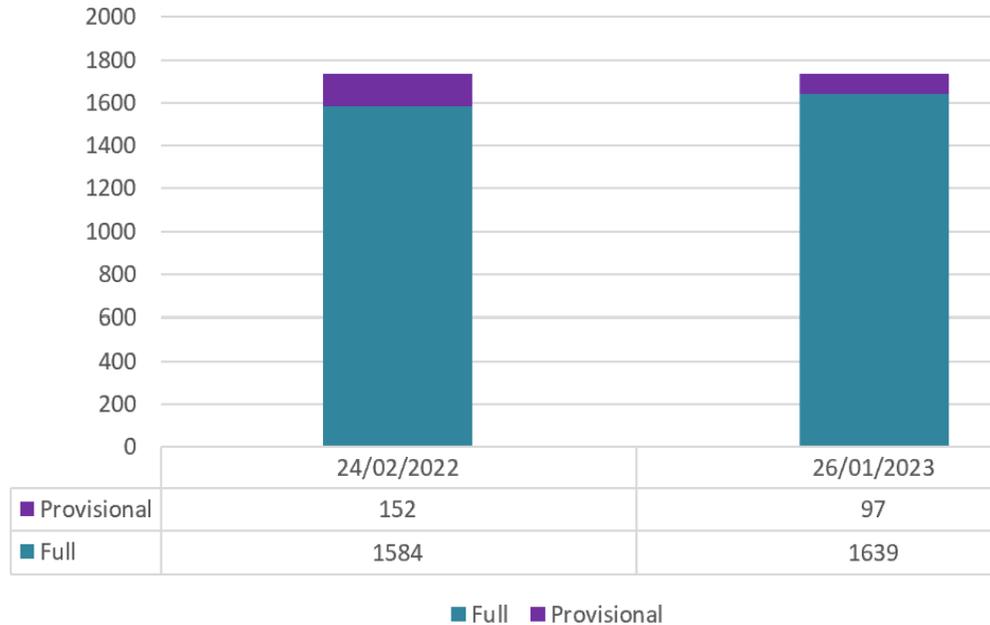
Between February 2022 and January 2023, there was an increase of 55 in the number of museums holding Full Accreditation.

This means that 94% of the 1736 museums within the Scheme have demonstrated that they meet the full requirements of the scheme and have been approved by the assessing panel.

When looking at all museums in the Scheme, including those within provisional Accreditation, the number of museums in the scheme has remained at 1736.

Accreditation by Nation

Figure 2: In January 2023 there were more museums with Full Accreditation than Provisional Accreditation in all UK nations
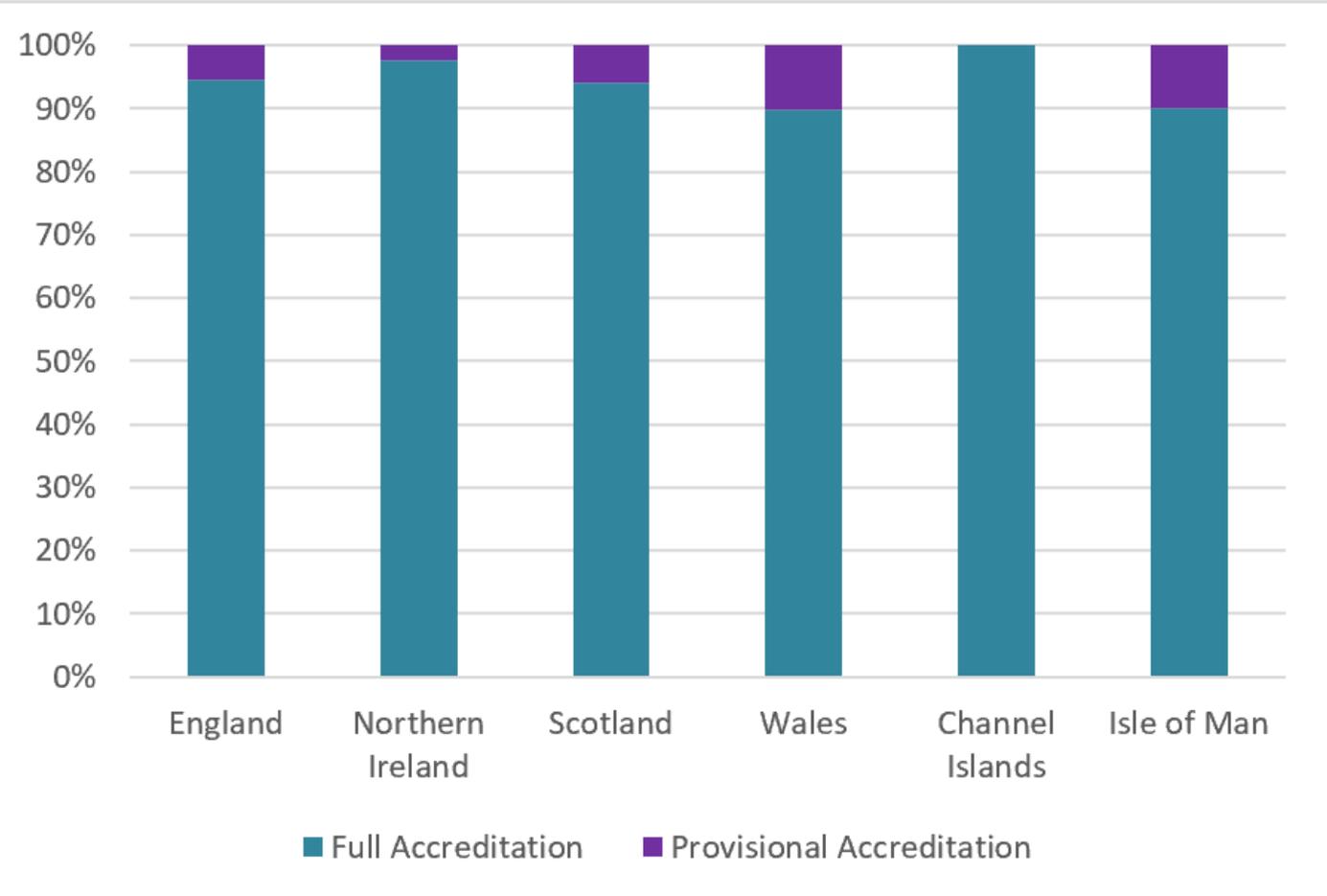
Museum Governance

Figure 3: The largest group of Accredited museums in most UK nations is independents (January 2023)
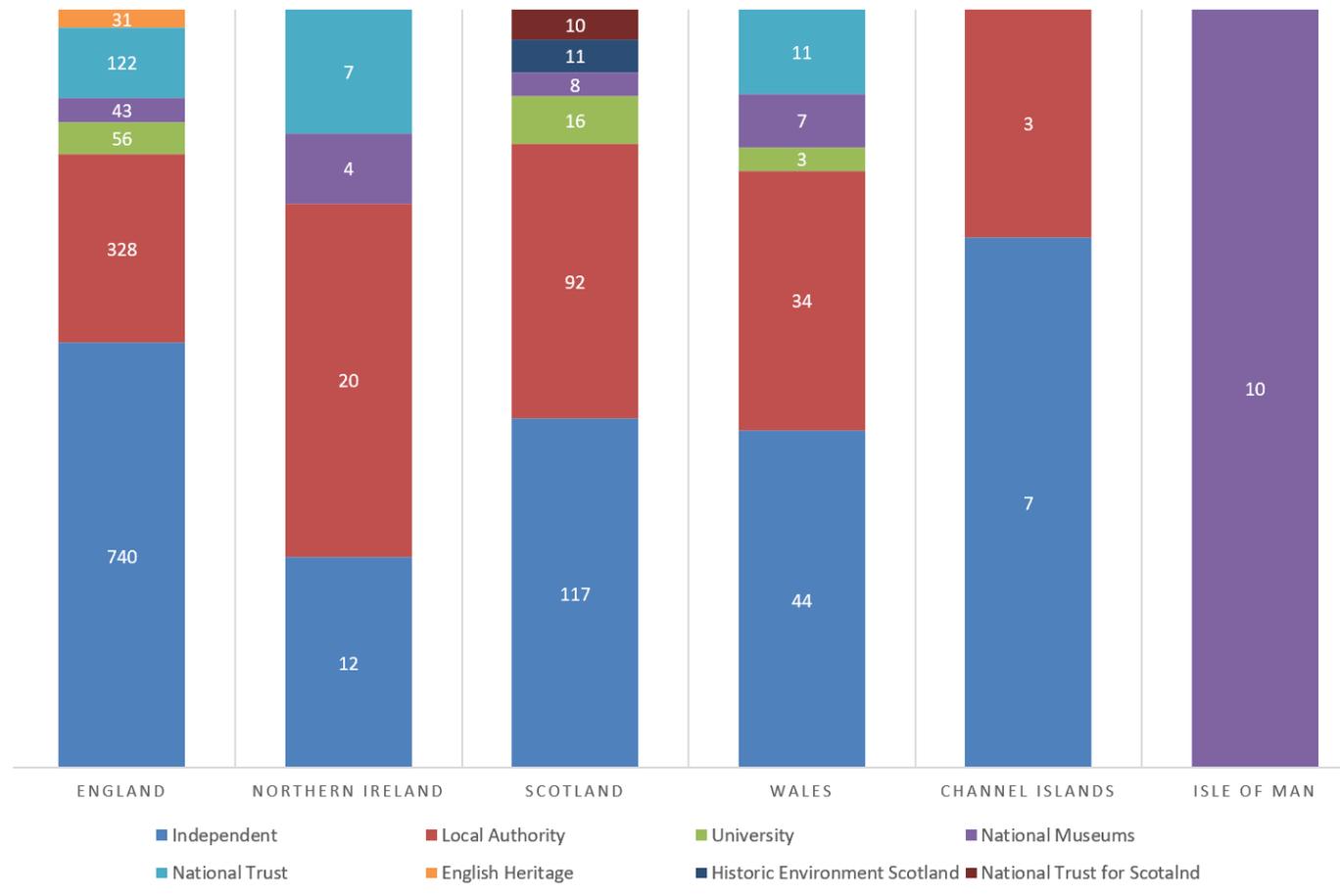
Independent museums make up the largest share of Accredited museums in most UK nations, and they make up more than half (55%) of the total UK museums in the Scheme.

Figure 4: Governance types of museums in the Scheme has changed over the previous year

Governance	Change
Independent	⬆ 10
Local Authority	⬇ -10
National Trust	⬇ -2
University	⬆ 1
National Museums	⬆ 1
English Heritage	➡ 0
Historic Environment Scotland	⬆ 1
National Trust for Scotland	⬇ -1
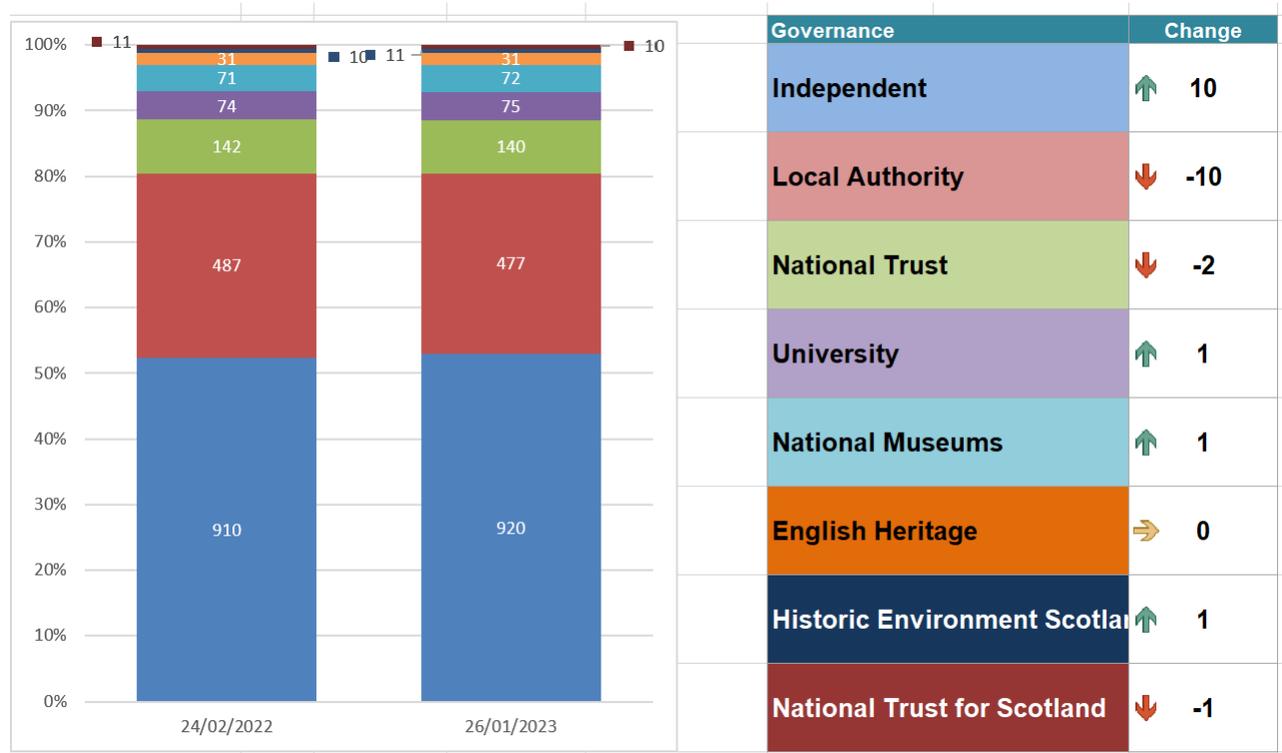
The number of independent museums increased by 1.09% (+10), from 910 to 920 between February 2022 and January 2023, where the number of Local Authority museums decreased by 2.05% (-10), from 487 to 477.

Return applications and reviews

Between February 2022 and January 2023 (inclusive), 231 cases were presented to the panels of the Accreditation committee. These cases consisted of return applications, provisional reviews, significant change reviews, new applications and removals. More information regarding cases at panels and panel outcomes, including reasons for removal, can be found on pages 14 – 17. There were seven standard meetings during this period.

**Figure 5: Provisional reviews and return applications**
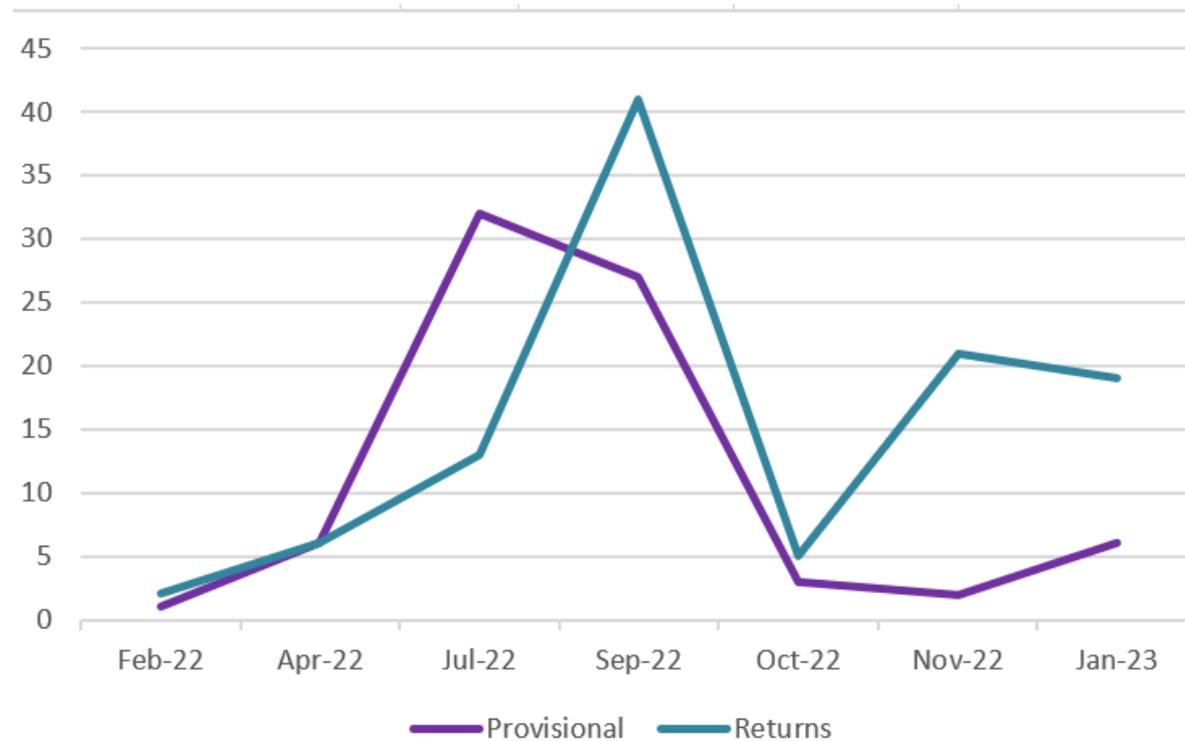
Figure 6: New applications and removals from the scheme
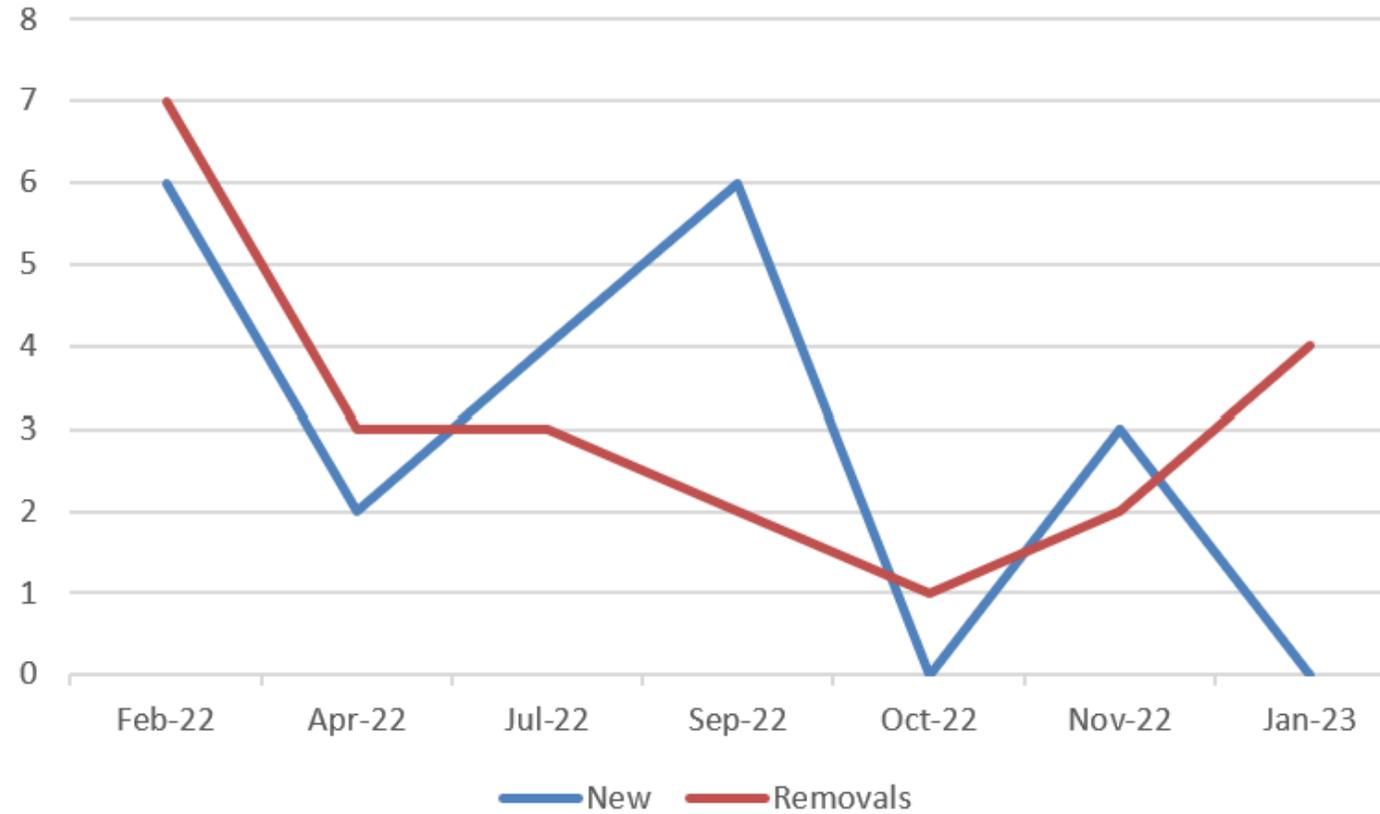
In January 2023 reasons for removal from the scheme were withdrawal (4).

Appendix 1: Museums in the Scheme

Explanation of Scheme categories:

- **Museums with Full Accreditation** have demonstrated that they meet the Accreditation Standard and are actively addressing any areas for improvement identified during their initial assessment or regular monitoring review and requested by an Accreditation panel.

- **Museums with Provisional Accreditation** have demonstrated that they meet the majority of the Accreditation Standard and are actively resolving those required actions requested by an Accreditation panel to ensure they meet those sections of the Standard not yet met. On completion of these required actions, the museum would normally return to an Accreditation panel with a recommendation for full status.

- **Remove and exclude due to deliberate non-compliance (Exclude).** This decision applies when a museum or its governing body have made an irreversible decision or action which goes against the shared ethical basis of the scheme by contravening the standard. Excluded museums will not become eligible for Accreditation for a minimum of five years from effective decision date of the panel. Excluded museums may apply for consideration of eligibility to the relevant assessing organisations five years after their removal for non-compliance.

Number of museums and galleries in the Accreditation Scheme (February 2022 - January 2023):

	Feb-22		Apr-22		Jul-22		Sep-22		Oct-22		Nov-22		Jan-23	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Full Accreditation	1584	91.2%	1586	91.4%	1612	92.9%	1636	94.0%	1637	94.1%	1647	94.7%	1639	94.4%
Provisional Accreditation	152	8.8%	149	8.6%	124	7.1%	104	6.0%	102	5.9%	93	5.3%	97	5.6%
Total	**1736**	**100%**	**1735**	**100%**	**1736**	**100%**	**1740**	**100%**	**1739**	**100%**	**1740**	**100%**	**1736**	**100%**
Excluded	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-	0	-

Accreditation by Nation

Number of museums in the Accreditation Scheme by location (February 2022 - January 2023):

	Feb-22		Apr-22		Jul-22		Sep-22		Oct-22		Nov-22		Jan-23	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
England	1321	76.1%	1320	76.1%	1321	76.1%	1324	76.1%	1323	76.1%	1324	76%	1320	76.0%
Northern Ireland	42	2.4%	42	2.4%	42	2.4%	43	2.5%	43	2.5%	43	2%	43	2.5%
Scotland	254	14.6%	254	14.6%	254	14.6%	254	14.6%	254	14.6%	254	15%	254	14.6%
Wales	99	5.7%	99	5.7%	99	5.7%	99	5.7%	99	5.7%	99	6%	99	5.7%
Isle of Man	10	0.6%	10	0.6%	10	0.6%	10	0.6%	10	0.6%	10	1%	10	0.6%
Channel Islands	10	0.6%	10	0.6%	10	0.6%	10	0.6%	10	0.6%	10	1%	10	0.6%
Total Scheme	**1736**	**100%**	**1735**	**100%**	**1736**	**100%**	**1740**	**100%**	**1739**	**100%**	**1740**	**100%**	**1736**	**100%**

Number of museums in the Accreditation Scheme by English region (February 2022 - January 2023):

	Feb-22		Apr-22		Jul-22		Sep-22		Oct-22		Nov-22		Jan-23	
	No.	%*	No.	%*	No.	%*	No.	%*	No.	%*	No.	%*	No.	%*
East of England	161	12.2%	163	12.4%	164	12.4%	165	12.5%	165	12.5%	165	12%	165	12.5%
East Midlands	108	8.2%	108	8.2%	109	8.3%	109	8.2%	109	8.2%	111	8%	111	8.4%
London	133	10.1%	132	10.0%	131	9.9%	132	10.0%	132	10.0%	132	10%	131	9.9%
North East	63	4.8%	63	4.8%	63	4.8%	63	4.8%	63	4.8%	63	5%	62	4.7%
North West	137	10.4%	137	10.4%	138	10.4%	137	10.3%	137	10.4%	136	10%	136	10.3%
South East	240	18.2%	240	18.2%	240	18.2%	240	18.1%	240	18.1%	239	18%	239	18.1%
South West	208	15.8%	207	15.7%	208	15.7%	209	15.8%	209	15.8%	209	16%	208	15.8%
West Midlands	131	9.9%	131	9.9%	131	9.9%	132	10.0%	131	9.9%	131	10%	130	9.8%
Yorkshire	138	10.5%	137	10.4%	137	10.4%	137	10.3%	137	10.4%	138	10%	138	10.5%
Total England	**1319**	**100%**	**1318**	**100%**	**1321**	**100%**	**1324**	**100%**	**1323**	**100%**	**1324**	**100%**	**1320**	**100%**

* Percentage of total Accredited museums in England

Number of museums in the Accreditation Scheme by status and location (January 2023):

	England		Northern		Scotland		Wales		Channel		Isle of Man		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Full Accreditation	1250	95%	42	98%	239	94%	89	90%	10	100%	9	90%	1639	94%
Provisional Accreditation	70	5%	1	2%	15	6%	10	10%	0	0%	1	10%	97	6%
Total Scheme	1320	100%	43	100%	254	100%	99	100%	10	100%	10	100%	1736	100%

Museum Governance

Number of museums in the Accreditation Scheme by governance type and location (January 2023)

	England	Northern Ireland	Scotland	Wales	Channel Islands	Isle of Man	Total	
Local Authority	328	20	92	34	3	0	477	**27.5%**
Independent	740	12	117	44	7	0	920	**53.0%**
National Trust	122	7	0	11	0	0	140	**8.1%**
National Trust Scotland	0	0	10	0	0	0	10	**0.6%**
University	56	0	16	3	0	0	75	**4.3%**
National Museum	43	4	8	7	0	10	72	**4.1%**
English Heritage	31	0	0	0	0	0	31	**1.8%**
Historic Environment Scotland	0	0	11	0	0	0	11	**0.6%**
Total Scheme	**1320**	**43**	**254**	**99**	**10**	**10**	**1736**	**100%**

Appendix 2: Return applications, reviews, and removals over the last year

Once a museum has submitted an application or return, an initial assessment is undertaken by an assessor, based on the published Standard and the associated guidance documents. An assessor may also visit the museum as part of the assessment.

Completed assessments are submitted for a quality assurance review (moderation) and scheduled for panel consideration. The Accreditation panel (formed of members of the Accreditation Committee) then decides the award outcome and the award is confirmed (as appropriate).

Four award outcomes are possible for returning applicants:

- Full Accreditation
- Provisional Accreditation
- Remove
- Remove & exclude due to deliberate non-compliance

New applicants can only receive Full Accreditation at a panel meeting, or their application will not be taken forward.

Panel meetings activity (February 2022 - January 2023):

	Feb-22		Apr-22		Jul-22		Sep-22		Oct-22		Nov-22		Jan-23		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Provisional reviews	1	6%	6	35%	32	63%	27	36%	3	33%	10	40%	6	18%	85	38%
Returns	2	13%	6	35%	12	24%	41	54%	5	56%	10	40%	19	58%	95	43%
New applications	6	38%	2	12%	4	8%	6	8%	0	0%	3	12%	0	0%	21	9%
Removals	7	44%	3	18%	3	6%	2	3%	1	11%	2	8%	4	12%	22	10%
Compliance review	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Significant Change Review	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	12%	4	100%
Total	16	100%	17	100%	51	100%	76	100%	9	100%	25	100%	33	88%	223	100%

Return outcomes at each panel (February 2022 - January 2023):

	Feb-22		Apr-22		Jul-22		Sep-22		Oct-22		Nov-22		Jan-23		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Full	2	100%	6	100%	11	92%	38	93%	5	100%	9	90%	16	84%	87	92%
Provisional	0	0%	0	0%	1	8%	3	7%	0	0%	1	10%	3	16%	8	8%
Total	2	100%	6	100%	12	100%	41	100%	5	100%	10	100%	19	100%	95	100%

Removals

The status of museums is regularly reviewed and where appropriate they are removed from the scheme. Typical reasons for removal are:

- **closure**: the collection has been transferred elsewhere

- **change of function**: ineligible for participation, no longer a museum

- **serious disaster**: for example, a catastrophic fire – no longer in a position to continue as a museum

- **merger**: combined with another organisation delivering similar objectives that is already participating with the scheme

- **capacity**: some museums are not able to meet the Standard

- **withdrawal**: some museums choose to voluntarily withdraw and so are removed from the Scheme in line with their own instructions

Where a museum is removed, Relationship Managers, Accreditation (ACE) will inform museum development and advisors of the reason, so appropriate support, and guidance can be provided. UK Accreditation assessing organisations (MGS, the Welsh Government and NIMC) hold direct responsibility for advice and development support in their nations. Removal from the scheme is not comparable to being excluded.

Reasons for removal at Accreditation panels (February 2022 - January 2023)

	Feb-22		Apr-22		Jul-22		Sep-22		Oct-22		Nov-22		Jan-23		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Closure	4	-	1	-	1	33%	1	50%	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	8	36%
Change of function	2	-	1	-	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4	18%
Serious disaster	0	-	0	-	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Merger	0	-	0	-	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Capacity	0	100%	0	100%	1	33%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	5%
Withdrawal	1	-	1	-	1	33%	0	0%	1	100%	1	50%	4	100%	9	41%
Total	7	100%	3	100%	3	100%	2	100%	1	100%	2	100%	4	100%	22	100%