

# PROPERTIES IN THE CARE OF SCOTTISH MINISTERS

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21



HISTORIC  
ENVIRONMENT  
SCOTLAND

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Report compiled by:  
Dr Clare Torney, Head of Analytics, Reporting & Audit  
Gary Carvel, Analytics & Reporting Officer



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Any enquiries regarding this document should be sent to us at:  
Historic Environment Scotland  
Longmore House  
Salisbury Place  
Edinburgh  
EH9 1SH

+44 (0) 131 668 8600

[www.historicenvironment.scot](http://www.historicenvironment.scot)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the activity undertaken at and on the Properties in Care and the associated collections in the 2020-21 financial year, and serves to fulfil our *Scheme of Delegation* performance management reporting requirements.

2020-21 has certainly not been a typical year. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated lockdown events on our ability to deliver our delegated functions is evident throughout this report. Whilst comparisons with previous years are made in this report, we recognise that this is not a just assessment of performance.

In March 2020, ahead of the first UK wide lockdown, we announced the closure of staffed sites across our estate. Whilst, in theory, maintaining a site access level of 62% over the course of the year, largely through our unstaffed ‘open air’ sites, our visitors were undeniably impacted. Staffed sites opened for a relatively brief period before being closed once again as a result of the second lockdown and our unstaffed properties were accessible only for those in the local area. Our visitor numbers fell to 246,245 at our staffed sites, this is just 5% of the previous year’s figure; visitor numbers at our top five visited sites saw an overall drop of 94%.

Closure of our sites typically brings with it a negative impact on the local economy. In 2019-20, the HES estate contributed an estimated £620 million net direct tourism expenditure. In a typical year, the 2020-21 site closures and associated loss of potential visitors, would have had a huge impact on this contribution, but given the closure of hospitality and retail for much of the year, it is unlikely that tourism expenditure could have reached these levels, even if access to the properties had been permitted. In 2020-21 our properties contributed £16 million net direct tourism expenditure.

The increasing maintenance burden of our properties continues to grow. Historic repairs undertaken by our predecessors alongside natural deterioration accelerated by climate change are becoming an increasing challenge to deal with. COVID negatively impacted our on-site operations as the properties were closed for a period not seen since the Second World War. While on site operations were limited, we focused our attention on developing stringent procedures aligned to government guidance to ensure the safe return of our visitors as restrictions lift, and we are able to again provide access to the properties and collections.

Condition checking of vulnerable building fabric will be a top priority as we return to more familiar operational levels at our sites. Throughout the period we closely followed government guidance and established protocols which we share with our colleagues across the sector.

In 2020-21 we invested £25.3 million in the Properties in Care and associated collections, a large proportion of this relates to staffing costs. As expected, this figure has seen a significant drop relative to the previous year (£37.3 million).

During this past year we, like others, faced challenges we had never anticipated. Our staff were exemplary in rising to the challenges of developing and implementing innovative ways in which to manage and deliver our statutory obligations, and keep our visitors safe. Many of our teams took the time away from site to focus on strategic planning; undertaking work to establish how we can best care for our staff, our visitors and our historic assets as we begin to resume our on-site activities. Whilst we expect the impact of the pandemic to be felt for quite some time, our dedicated focus on planning for a safe return gives us assurance that we have in place what we need to get there.

## I INTRODUCTION

Historic Environment Scotland is the lead public body caring for Scotland's historic environment. We have been delegated authority from Scottish Ministers to care for 336 'Properties in Care' and their associated collections under the *Schemes of Delegation* (under Section 3 of the *Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014*).

The *Schemes of Delegation* require us have in place mechanisms for performance management in relation to our delivery of the *Schemes*, namely a series of indicators used to assess the effectiveness of our operation of the *Schemes*. These indicators must enable measurement in exercising the delegated functions and, in particular, must show:

- the condition of the Properties in Care (PICs)
  - the impact of the investment made in them
  - the provision of public access to the properties
- the condition of the associated collections
  - the standard of their care
  - the provision of public access to the collections.

This report serves to demonstrate our performance in these areas and fulfils the requirement to report on these areas of performance for monitoring by Scottish Government.

This report relates specifically to the 2020-21 financial year; comparison with reports from previous years as well as figures presented here will highlight the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our ability to deliver the *Schemes of Delegation*.

### I.1 Managing our assets during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic and the first UK lockdown meant that our properties were already closed at the beginning of the 2020-21 financial year. As a result of this, and the 'stay at home' order enforced by the government, our usual programme of compliance, maintenance and condition checking activities at our

properties was significantly disrupted. A large number of staff were placed on furlough for an extended period.

In April 2020, in alignment with government guidelines, we implemented an emergency protocol that adopted a ‘command and control’ approach for the management of our properties and associated collections. At this time, our corporate priorities were:

1. the safety of our staff, members of the public and external contractors
2. the security of HES assets – PICs, ancillary buildings, equipment, and commercial stock
3. risk management of the collections associated with HES Properties in Care.

This process allowed for key staff to undertake emergency (and thereafter critical and preventative) works at the properties in alignment with the priorities above. The permitted works at the emergency stage were minimal and associated with life safety checks (e.g. fire and fabric), security and safety systems and response to wilful damage (e.g. arson and theft).

Our risk-based assessment approach attributed specific permitted activities to six different levels of PIC operational response (Figure 1). The permitted activities at the selected PICs during each level of response was determined through a PIC triage process - using life safety, security, and fire risk metrics for the built assets and collections. This approach ensured that the highest risks were considered and managed first.

We worked our way through these levels of activity in accordance with government guidance, and the pace at which we moved our PICs through this process varied from site to site and area to area. Given the operational and financial challenges imposed by the pandemic, strategic decisions were made in relation to the resumption of sites (for a resumption timeline see Section 2.3), and some sites have remained closed for the duration. Those that did reopen, did so in a phased manner, and were closed again in December 2020 in accordance with the second government enforced lockdown. At the time of writing this report (April-May 2021) we are now preparing for resumption of sites once again.

In parallel with delivering this emergency protocol, we were focused on developing our ‘*Minimum Operating Standards*’. This comprehensive document was put in place to underpin all our planning around site resumption and ensure we were ready to open sites once restrictions lifted; this document essentially acts

as a check-list for everything we needed to do to safely open a site. Our *Minimum Operating Standards* take into consideration a range of internal policies, as well as Scottish Government guidance, legislation and best practice, and were continuously updated in alignment with changing regulations. Our *Minimum Operating Standards* were adopted by others in the sector and we participated in sector focus groups to ensure we provided support to other asset owners as they too faced the challenges of closures and subsequent resumption activity. This included the introduction of CO<sub>2</sub> monitors to be used as a proxy measure for airflow indoors which was picked up by other asset managers.

COVID-19 PiC response status level	Scope of activity	Permitted activity
<b>1</b> Emergency response only	All PiCs, offices, depots & stores closed to staff and public	Emergency response to emergency service call outs only
<b>2</b> Critical activity	All PiCs closed to staff & public Critical activity only to mitigate catastrophic risk of loss at sites with highest known life safety, fire and security risks	Life safety checks Fire safety checks Security checks
<b>3</b> Preventative activity	Limited access for key staff at selected PiCs, depots & collections stores Activity to mitigate loss & prevent loss of future business activity at sites with known high risks, including loads under GIS	Some statutory inspections Some environmental controls Some wind & watertight checks Some grounds maintenance
<b>4</b> Recovery activity	Staff access PiCs but closed to public Preparation for reopening on a selective phased planned programme	Statutory inspections High level fabric inspections Environmental controls Deep cleaning Grounds maintenance Restocking & presentation
<b>5</b> Partial operational activity	Some depots, collections stores & offices open Partial operation of PiCs Phased opening programme	Operational activity at selected sites
<b>6</b> Full operational activity	Full operation of PiCs, depots, collection stores & offices	Operational activity

Figure 1 - HES Asset Emergency Management Protocol in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



## 2 THE PROPERTIES IN CARE

This has been an exceptional and transformational year, where the solutions developed to address the challenges presented by the pandemic at our PICs present many opportunities on which to base a more sustainable management model for our PICs in the future.

All areas of the business associated with the PICs have been impacted, most notably, income streams and delivery of our operations and management functions; not least planned works, surveys, inspections and works programmes.

The adoption of our *Minimum Operating Standards* by the sector and our participation in national ‘learning from each other’ focus groups for heritage, museums, galleries and visitor attractions demonstrates how we continue to lead and support the sector. Our staff were exemplary in rising to the challenges of developing and implementing innovative ways in which to manage and deliver our statutory obligations.

Improved web-based access to PICs and an improved digital visitor experience at re-opened PICs has been expedited. Internally, remote access for all staff to PIC information through the development of our PIC Asset Management System (PICAMS) has been transformational in how we carry out our asset management and operations and will continue to improve the way we work moving forwards.

Our priority throughout the year has been to keep our visitors and staff safe and healthy at our PICs, with a continued focus on the mitigation of critical life safety risk – be that presented by COVID, high level masonry, rockfalls, or other hazards.

Budgets remain, and are likely to remain, challenging for some time. We recognised that there simply isn’t enough resource to meet demands. This means that prioritisation of investment on a risk management basis will continue across our operations as set out in our *Asset Management Strategy*, and where required we will take steps to manage risks by excluding access if required. We will also continue to explore opportunities for alignment of PIC investment with regional economic and green recovery initiatives.

Our Sustainable Strategy Project, launched earlier in the year, will seek to explore a new sustainable management strategy for our PICS that incorporates the

learning and positive developments made during this exceptional year, as we continue to care for and provide access to our PICs moving forwards.

## 2.1 Condition of the Properties

Over the past number of years, we have been increasingly challenged to maintain the condition of our monuments. The often-unforgiving Scottish climate paired with a history of legacy repairs using incompatible materials by our predecessors in the 1930s and insufficient investment relative to needs is driving the deterioration of our monuments. The ever-increasing maintenance burden particularly associated with many of our more vulnerable unroofed monuments is reaching a tipping point.

We are continuing to develop our understanding of how the monuments and their landscapes are being impacted by the changing climate and we are exploring potential action in the way of adaptation at both operational and strategic levels to increase resilience of our assets. However, it is evident that condition is declining at an ever-increasing rate, and with current climate projections this is not set to slow down; to a large extent, the damage caused by the current climate has increased their vulnerability to future changes.

In addition to these challenges, we have seen a year-on-year increase in instances of heritage crime at our properties over the past few years; these are primarily related to criminal damage, vandalism, property damage, and fire; which further contribute to, and indeed accelerate, the deterioration of our monuments and their landscapes. In 2020-21, incidents of heritage crime at our sites were up 53% on the previous year. Holyrood Park was the subject of 37% of all criminal incidents recorded at HES PiCs in 2020-21; two-thirds of incidents in the Park are either criminal damage or fire related.

Our continually evolving understanding of how our monuments interact with their environment, and specifically the changing climate, has led to a greater awareness of their potential vulnerabilities; our 2018 *Climate Change Risk Assessment* drew our attention to the level of risk faced by many of our monuments. This work is the most in depth study to date of the historic sites in the care of HES and the results of this initial risk assessment were intended to provide the strategic basis for existing maintenance work programmes, as well as the allocation of funds for future works.

The knowledge and understanding gained through this exercise prompted us to take a closer look at monument condition, particularly in relation to factors such as high level exposed building fabric on our unroofed monuments, which if not maintained, can pose a risk to life safety.

Our most vulnerable monuments have reached the point where maintenance alone can no longer sustain the condition required to guarantee safe access. Investment and intervention is needed to ensure the safe operation of these sites, until then access will continue to be restricted on safety grounds; keeping our visitors and staff safe remains our top priority. With this in mind, we are firmly focused on prioritising compliance and condition checking activity at the properties.

That being said, due to government enforced lockdown and 'stay at home' orders, we were unable to deliver our usual programme of condition checking activity at the properties in 2021-21. Typically, we would deliver a programme of condition surveys, conservation audits and routine maintenance inspections across the estate. Whilst we were able to deliver these at some sites, at some points during the year, the programme was significantly disrupted, and activity was focused on emergency and critical checks as per our protocol illustrated in Figure 1. Where government restriction levels permitted, we delivered checks and works associated with life safety - specifically high level historic building fabric, gravestones, tree safety and rock slope stability. All sites re-opened were subject to a thorough assessment protocol and senior management approval.

Condition Surveys were commenced, but not completed at Craigmillar Castle, Mavisbank Policies, and Rothesay Castle; these will be completed in the 2021-22 financial year, as will partially completed Conservation Audits for Dunstaffnage Castle, Bonawe Iron Furnace, and Ardchattan Priory.

Time away from site during the COVID restrictions gave us the opportunity to focus resource on the further development of our high level inspection risk assessment methodology and documentation. We have also been focusing on replanning the delivery of our high level inspection baseline assessment, which was put on hold for much for the year. We delivered high level inspections at two PICs in 2020-21: Jedburgh Abbey and Craigmillar Castle. These inspections have given us some insight into the condition of high level masonry at vulnerable, unroofed sites; access restrictions have been put in place where fabric

(particularly sandstone masonry) stability presents a risk. As a result of these findings we will prioritise investigation at other similar sites in 2021-22.

Following the baseline exercise to establish risk levels associated with natural rock slopes undertaken in 2019-20, we continued a programme of re-appraisal in line with the recommendations of our specialist geotechnical contractor. We commissioned rock slope risk appraisals at three PICs.

Figure 2 shows where inspections and checks were delivered in the 2020-21 financial year; in total we delivered rock slope risk appraisals at three properties, high level inspections at two properties, gravestone inspections at two properties and tree safety inspections at sixteen properties.

During the periods of the year where government regulations permitted, we continued to deliver checks of our mechanical and electrical systems, and routine maintenance checks on the building fabric at our properties. In early 2021 we launched the 'maintenance app' on our 'PICAMS' Asset Management System. This now acts as our single source of information for data associated with building fabric maintenance inspections and associated defect recording across the estate. We plan to report on this activity in future years once we have captured a full financial year of data in the system; this data will help demonstrate the on-going challenges associated with managing a deteriorating asset stock directly impacted by climate change.

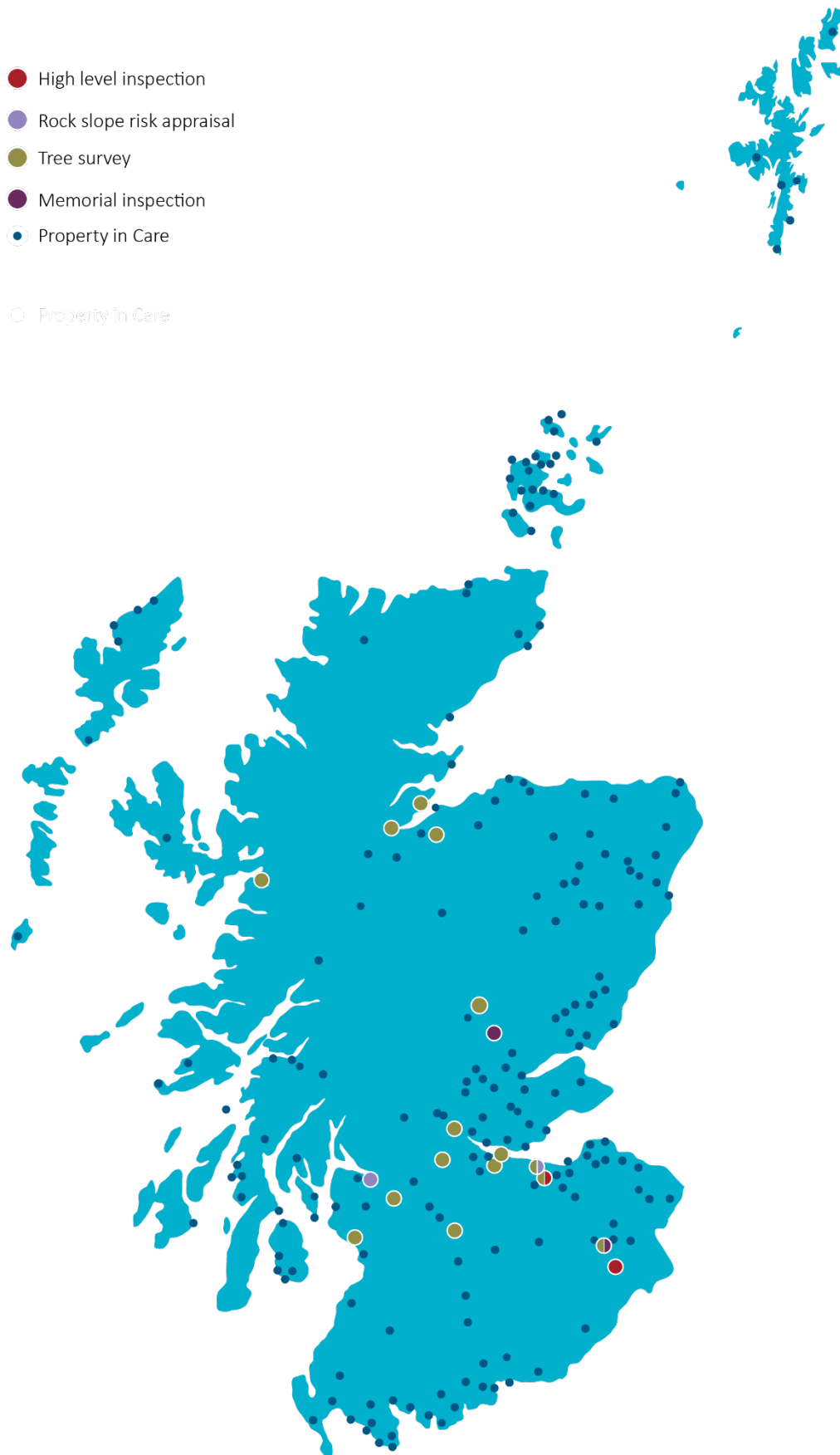


Figure 2 - the location of surveys and checks delivered during the 2020-21 financial year.

## 2.2 Impact of investment on the Properties

We invested a total of £25.3 million on the Properties in Care and associated collections this year, this includes staffing and support costs as well as investment relating to conservation and maintenance of the properties and to visitor facing aspects of asset management. Approximately 70% of this figure relates to staffing costs; we acknowledge that given the furloughing of many of our site-based staff for a proportion of the year, this figure does not provide an accurate reflection of delivery on-site.

£5.6 million was invested directly on the conservation and maintenance of the properties, visitor centres and depots which support PIC operations; a notable reduction from £8.3 million in 2019-20. Our conservation and maintenance work was restricted in line with our Asset Emergency Management Protocol; work was delivered when government guidelines permitted, and in alignment with our own *Minimum Operating Standards*.

### 2.2.1 Economic impact

The economic impact of our PICs in any given year can be estimated by net direct tourism expenditure; spend by tourists on-site and in the local area, which would otherwise be lacking in absence of these monuments. In 2019-20, the total figure for net direct tourism expenditure linked to the HES estate was £620 million. 2020-21 has been a year like no other. The changes in travel, and the impact of this on international tourism as well as the closure of hospitality and retail, means that the HES estate – even those sites that remained accessible – was not able to contribute in the way that it has done in previous years.

The HES estate contributed £16 million in net direct tourism expenditure in 2020-21.

### 2.2.2 Social impact

Forty-five per cent of our direct (site specific) investment on the properties was directed at properties located in areas of average or above average deprivation (SIMD  $\leq$  5<sup>th</sup> decile), up from 39% in 2019-20. Fifty-six per cent of the same investment was within rural areas, i.e. areas with a Scottish Government Urban Rural Classification of 5+ on the 8-fold classification; this is down from 60% in 2019-20.

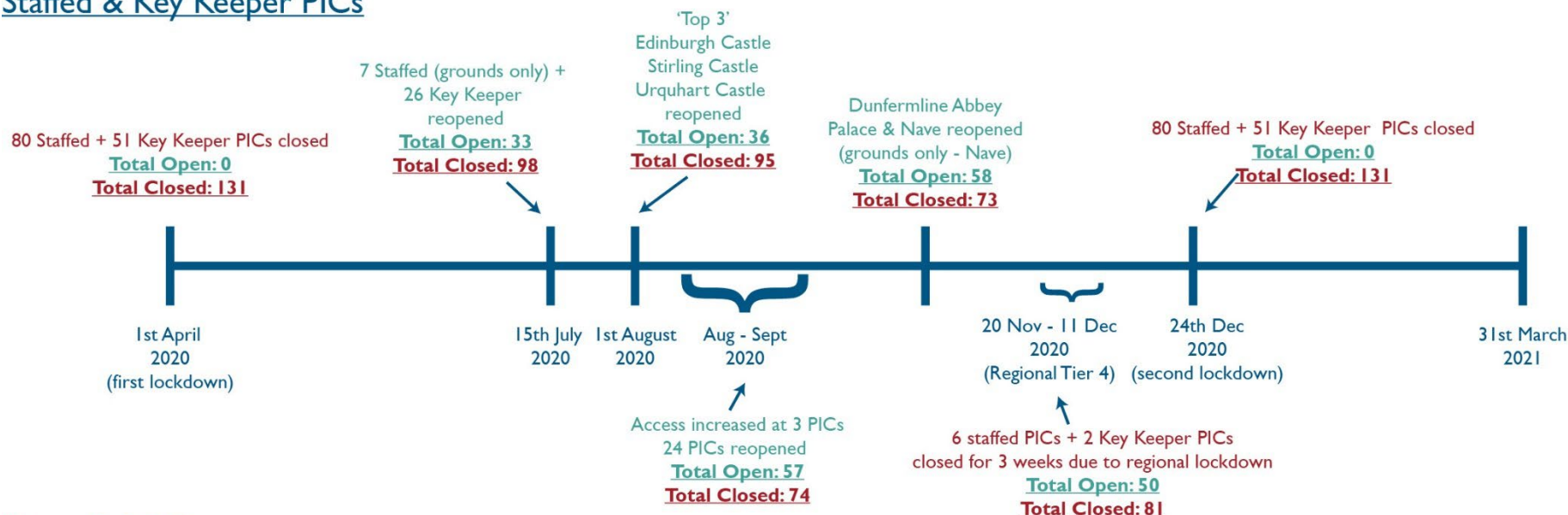
### 2.3 Provision of Public Access to the Properties

In April 2020 we modified our internal process relating to the recording and reporting of access restrictions at our sites, and in March 2021 we migrated this process to our digital asset management system PICAMS, improving staff accessibility to the data.

As part of the changes, rather than considering site restrictions as simply 'partial site' or 'full site' restrictions, we have developed a three-tier, six component hierarchy of restriction levels that better articulate the level (high, medium or low) and the nature of the impact of the restriction on the visitor access and experience. This gives us the ability to report to a more granular level that will help us better understand the impact of site access restrictions on our visitors. For the purposes of this report, we will focus primarily on high impact restrictions: high impact restrictions are those which prevent visitor access to a property in its entirety.

For the past three years of reporting, the level of access to PICs relative to their advertised opening schedules has remained static at 98%. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has seen this fall to 62%. A significant proportion of our estate, including all our staffed sites, were closed for a large part of the 2020-21 financial year. We resumed a selection of our staffed sites gradually and in line with government guidance over the summer of 2020 (Figure 3), but by December, these were closed again during the second UK lockdown and at the time of writing this report, we once again plan for the resumption for a selection of sites for the 2021-22 season. The majority of our 'open air' unstaffed sites remained open to local visitors; those which did not spatially accommodate social distancing regulations were closed or partially restricted to ensure the safety of visitors.

## Staffed & Key Keeper PICs



## Unstaffed PICs

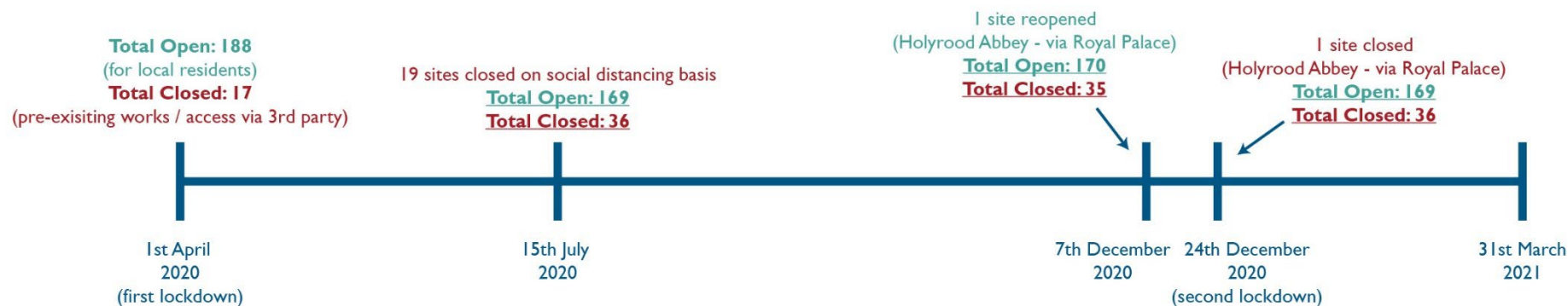


Figure 3 - resumption timeline of staffed and key keeper PICs (top) and unstaffed PICs (bottom) throughout the 2020-21 financial year. Whilst HES communicated full estate closure over the period of both lockdowns, the above figure, and the access days reported within this report are a true representation of the level of access when considering 'open air' (unstaffed) sites that were open throughout the year for those who were permitted access to them under government guidelines (i.e. local residents within 5 miles, or those within the Local Authority Area).



Figure 4 gives an indication of performance in maintaining visitor access to the properties by showing the number of PICs at which differing levels of access were achieved or maintained throughout the year. In 2020-21 there were:

- 166 properties at which full access was maintained all year
- 6 properties that were open all year but were partially restricted at some point(s) throughout the year
- 164 that were fully closed at some point in the year

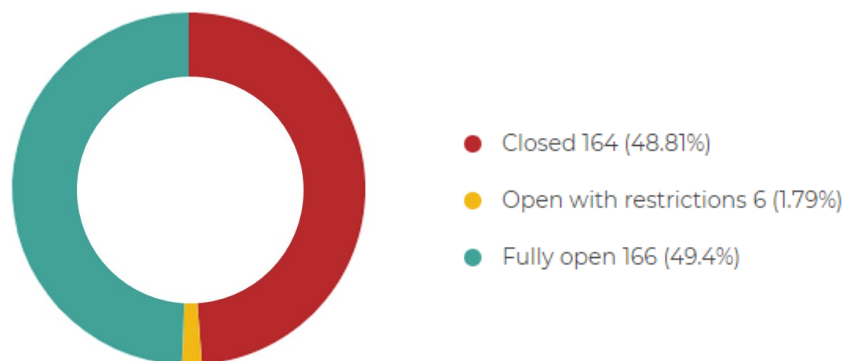


Figure 4 – performance in maintaining visitor access at the Properties in Care. Pie chart shows the status of HES PICs by their highest impact level at any point during the 2020-21 reporting period (taken from the HES Properties in Care Asset Management System (PICAMS) restrictions reporting system).

As expected, the COVID-19 pandemic accounts for the majority of our site closures in 2020-21; 95% of all closure days are attributed to this (Figure 5).

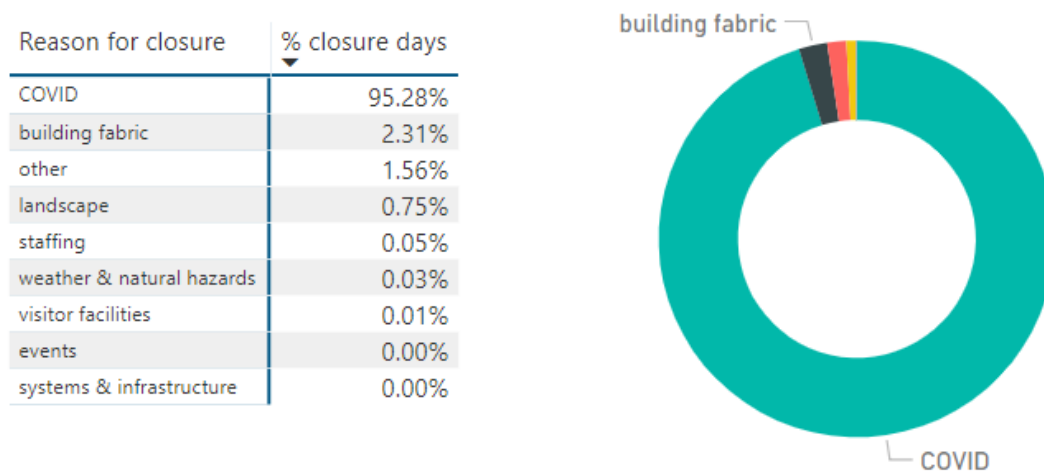


Figure 5 – reasons for high impact (full site) closures in 2020-21.

The figures presented above give an indication of our performance in providing access to the properties and therefore our fulfilment of the *Scheme of Delegation*. However, the reality of 2020-21 means that even those properties that were in theory accessible, were in fact out of reach to many of our usual and/or potential visitors as result of government-imposed travel restrictions.

Visitor numbers to our staffed properties totalled 246,245, just 5% of numbers for the previous year. Our top five visited properties each suffered a drop in visitor numbers of between 83% and 95% (Table 1). Doune Castle and Glasgow Cathedral, which were in our top five visited sites last year, suffered reductions of 96% and 99% respectively.

**Table 1 - visitor numbers at top 5 visited sites in 2020-21.**

	Property	Visitor numbers		Year on Year % +/-
		2019 20	2020 21	
1	Edinburgh Castle	2,064,082	96,322	-95%
2	Stirling Castle	585,131	38,670	-93%
3	Urquhart Castle	538,651	34,157	-94%
4	Fort George	74,735	7,418	-90%
5	Caerlaverock Castle	37,808	6,583	-83%

### 3 THE ASSOCIATED COLLECTIONS

Collections activity has been significantly impacted during this unprecedented year as we have adapted to the challenges and opportunities of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furloughing of many of our Collections colleagues in the first quarter of the year, and the travel restrictions in place on their return, meant that our usual collections care activities on site were extremely limited. Our focus shifted to protecting objects in place, and introducing a system of critical checks supported by local staff to comply with loan terms, insurance, and to mitigate risks which were increased by lack of presence on site.

Some notable exceptions were the critical on-site works at the Blackhouse in Arnol, required to make collections safe where they had been impacted by the

deterioration of the thatch roof causing damp and mould – a direct result of the site staff being unable to maintain the peat fire (an integral part of the building's ecosystem) due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Despite these challenges, we were able to undertake significant work remotely, including enhancing our collections information to improve record accuracy, and preparing records for online publication for our growing [Collections Highlights webpages](#). The award of £150,000 as part of a joint bid to the AHRC 'Capabilities for Collections' fund has enabled us to procure cutting edge equipment for material analysis, recording and replication; this equipment will support new research and promote efficient practices.

We have begun a review to address compliance with the Government Indemnity Scheme (GIS), a form of insurance that enables us to borrow loaned collections to enhance our displays. The GIS Action Plan will seek to review compliance across the estate and make recommendations for investment as part of a multiyear project subject to approval of a business case in 2022. This work will help us maintain and develop our displays, ensuring public access to the collections. Our core ethos of keeping objects on display in-situ wherever possible is reflected in our high 'on-display' figures.

The year ahead is an opportunity for us to reimagine our approach to collections management. With a new management team in place, we are developing a strategy and 5-year plan which will set out how a sustainable collections management model can be achieved. We will be undertaking a collections data and inventory project, to enhance collections information and make it accessible. As part of this work we intend to review our statistics, particularly in terms of how we monitor and record object condition, as well as the catalogue and inventory standards; this information will help us to develop an options appraisal for future collections storage and accommodation.

As we move forward, we will strengthen our sector presence and the support we offer. We have developed several skills investment pathways including hosting an 'Upskilling Volunteers' placement developed by Museum Galleries Scotland, a masters student from the New Museum School Advanced Programme (developed by Culture& and Leicester University Museums Studies), and we continue to

provide collections traineeship opportunities via our established conservation trainee programme.

### 3.1 Standard of Collections Care

Our progress in condition checking this year, although small, has brought our baseline condition checking a step closer to completion; we have now condition checked 66% of Scottish Ministers' collections in line with *Scheme of Delegation* requirements. This checking gives us a better understanding of the objects and their conservation needs. For the purposes of this *Scheme of Delegation* reporting, any objects checked prior to the implementation of our *Scheme of Delegation* condition checking procedure/standards are considered here as 'currently unchecked'.



Figure 6 – progress of object condition checking for Scottish Ministers' collections (left) and all other collections (right).

This year our full collection grew by just 22 objects, 11 of which are in Scottish Ministers' collections. We updated 3,892 object records in our collections database; 3,123 relating to Scottish Ministers' collections. Sixty-five per cent of our total collection is documented to full catalogue standard; 75% of Scottish Ministers' collections are documented to full catalogue standard.

In 2020-21 we developed three new salvage plans: two for PICs (Skara Brae and Tantallon Castle), and the third for an ancillary property, The Engine Shed. We also revised our salvage plans for Iona Abbey, Arbroath Abbey and Duff House.

In addition to these plans, we completed the development of our 5-year salvage plan that sets out our priorities for delivering salvage plans for all PICs within a five year period.

We have also used our time away from sites this year to start developing a Short Guide on salvage; we hope to publish this in 2022; and to undertake a benchmarking process to ensure our salvage planning is in line with the latest approaches in the heritage sector.

The Museum Accreditation Scheme was paused by Museums Galleries Scotland and the other UK partnership organisations in April 2020 in response to COVID-19. All museums with accredited status had their existing award extended for an additional 12 months; this has now been extended for a further 12 months, until April 2022. It is planned that the scheme will reopen for both new applicants and application renewals this year. We have used this time to re-evaluate our approach to the scheme and to determine how we can make improvements to our internal processes when applying for accredited status at our sites.

### 3.2 Condition of the Collections

We have continued to deliver our programme of baseline condition checking in line with *Scheme of Delegation* requirements, although this has been at a substantially slower pace due to pandemic-related restrictions. This year we managed to condition check just 479 objects in the associated collections (and 488 in total), compared to 5,132 the year before. Most of these are associated with St Andrew's Cathedral, and we also checked objects associated with Inchcolm Abbey, Skara Brae and Trinity House amongst others. Figure 7 illustrates our progress in delivering condition checks since 2015-16 and highlights the extent of the impact of the pandemic on the delivery of this important work.

Delivery of condition checking activity is based on an approach that considers known priorities and is often aligned with planned works. Therefore, the level of progress varies between PIC associated collections. Figure 8 shows the number of PICs at different stages of condition checking progress. Over time, as objects are checked, more PICs will reach the higher end of the scale (nearing completion). However, if objects are newly associated with a PIC (and its collection therefore increases in size), it is possible for the proportion of objects condition checked to decrease.

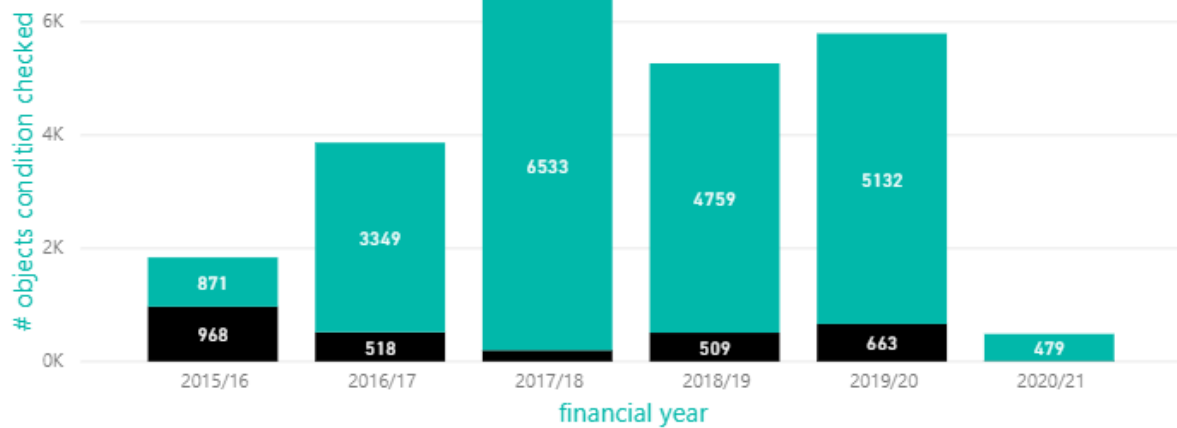


Figure 7 - progress in delivering baseline condition checking of the collections. Scottish Minister's collections are shown in green.

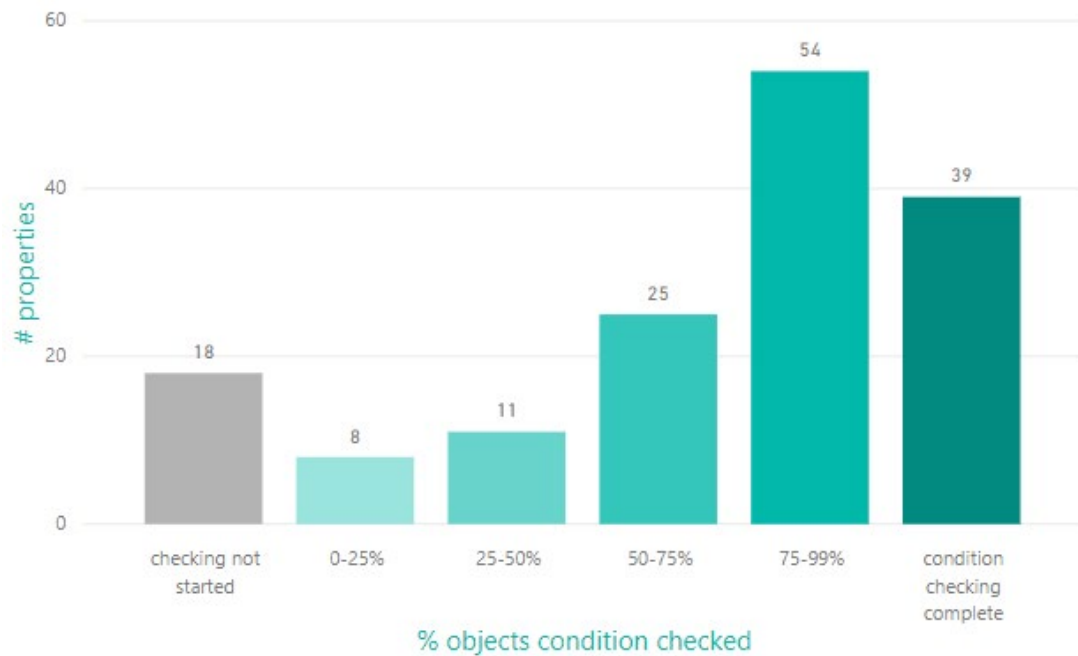


Figure 8 - PICs at various levels of progress in relation to condition checking of objects. Relates to Scottish Ministers' collections only. Class intervals include the right endpoint but not the left.

The condition checking process assigns a 'condition status' to each object, this indicates the overall condition of that object and provides an indication of its stability; categories are:

- stable – no action required
- stable – action required
- unstable – action low priority
- unstable – action high priority
- unstable – action immediately

Figure 9 shows the proportion of objects in each category (top left) and the proportion of objects that are in a stable versus unstable state (top right). We can track the changing stability of the collections and our progress in improving condition by tracking the proportion of PICs at which the collection falls within a certain stability banding, as shown in Figure 9 (bottom).

Less than 0.5% of the Scottish Ministers' collections (181 objects) are known to require immediate action and just 2.4% (1043 objects) are considered high priority. These values are likely to fluctuate over time as condition checking continues and we learn more about the objects in our care.

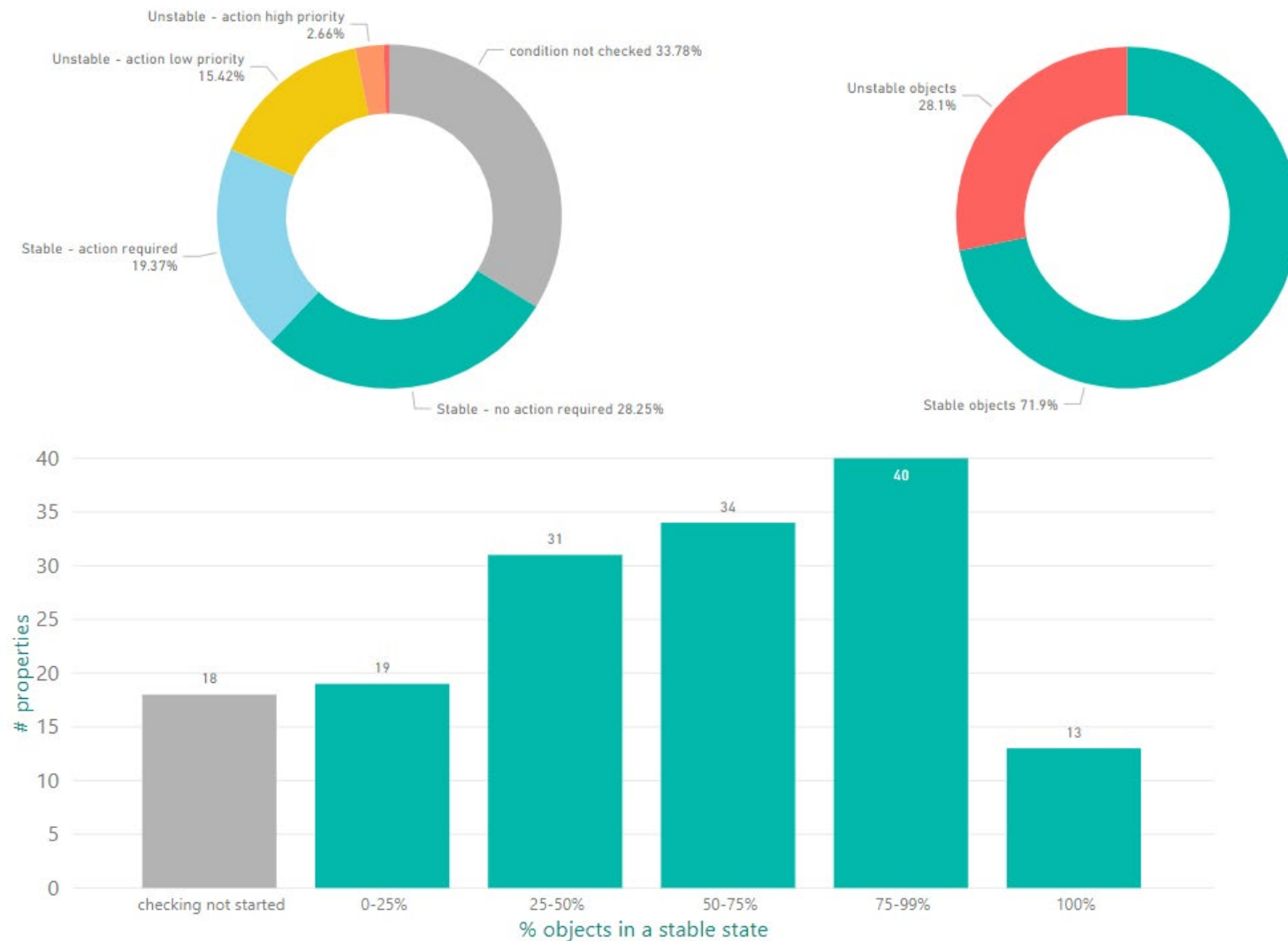


Figure 9 - condition and stability of the Scottish Minister's collections. Top left: proportion of Scottish Ministers' collections objects within each condition category. Top right: overall stability of objects in Scottish Minister's collections based on those which have been condition checked. Bottom: number of properties in each collection stability 'bracket'; class intervals include the right endpoint but not the left.



### 3.3 Provision of Public Access to the Collections

We continue to have good levels of collections on display and our core ethos is one of keeping objects on display in-situ where at all possible. Currently, 44% of our total collection is on display; 42% of Scottish Ministers' collections are displayed. To put this in context, many institutions struggle to achieve 10%.

In addition to our own displays, we had outward loans of 105 objects to 12 borrowers at 16 venues; these are objects on long-term loans. As a result of the pandemic, there were several high profile short-term outward loans scheduled for 2020-21 that were postponed. These will go ahead in 2021-22 and include an Archie Brennan tapestry from our headquarters building Longmore House that has gone to Dovecot Studios as part of their exhibition 'Archie Brennan: Tapestry Goes Pop!' that is running from April until August 2021. We have also been preparing a selection of objects from St Andrews Cathedral to lend to the British Library for their major exhibition 'Elizabeth and Mary: Royal Cousins, Rival Queens' and to the Museum of the University of St Andrews for their opening exhibition after the refurbishment of the Wardlaw Museum.

Digital accessibility of the collections has perhaps never been as important as it has been in 2020-21 when so few visitors were able to get physical access to the sites and collections displays. In the 2020-21 financial year, 103 new objects were added to our website. These are a mix of Scottish Ministers' collections and others. This brings the total number of objects published on the website at the end of March 2021 to 1,842. We recognise that this is less than 5% of the total collections and are continuing to invest to improve the design and existing content of the website. In addition to the objects on our website, we also have 369 collections models publicly available on Sketchfab. Due to the constraints of the pandemic, we have not been able to digitally document any additional collections objects this year.

As we look to the year ahead, our new collections inventory project will enable us to explore the ways in which data and images can be gathered to enhance and enrich the information we hold about the collections. We plan to establish a strategy as part of this work which will enable us to drive a programme of enhancements to ensure we share our collections information as widely as possible.