



DISABILITY SPORT NI

Gifts and Hospitality Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Charities will experience a variety of risks. It is the responsibility of charity trustees to manage actual and potential risks to ensure the charity can continue to meet the needs of beneficiaries, at present and in the future.
- 1.2. Trustees have a statutory duty to manage charitable resources responsibly. This includes:
 - ensuring charity funds are used appropriately, prudently, lawfully and in accordance with the charity's purposes for the public benefit,
 - protecting and safeguarding the assets of the charity.
- 1.3. Internal financial controls are essential checks, policies and procedures that help charity trustees to meet their legal duties to safeguard charity assets and administer charity finances efficiently and effectively.

2. Compliance

- 2.1. The charity will, at all times, comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and best practice guidance.
- 2.2. DSNi requires all those receiving or expending funds on behalf of the charity or representing the charity in any way (including its suppliers, grant recipients, partners, contractors, and agents), to act in accordance with all relevant policies and procedures.
- 2.3. In support of this policy, the charity will:

- Make all staff, and others within the scope of this policy, aware of the requirements and obligations placed on the charity (and on themselves as individuals) by the contents of this policy,
- 2.4. Any member of staff who knowingly fails to comply with this policy and associated procedures, may be subject to disciplinary action under DSNI's [Staff Disciplinary Rules and Procedures](#).

3. Purpose

- 3.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the charity's policy on the giving and receiving of gifts and hospitality.
- 3.2. This policy aims to guard the organisation, its officers, staff, volunteers and other associates, against the risk of allegations of impropriety by providing advice on a number of key issues.
- 3.3. The charity is committed to being transparent in all of its dealings. This policy is intended to provide guidance on how allegations of impropriety:
 - 3.3.1. Might arise where gifts, or hospitality, is offered, received or given,
 - 3.3.2. Can be avoided where gifts, or hospitality, is offered, received or given,
 - 3.3.3. Should be managed, once identified.

4. Scope

- 4.1. This policy is applicable to all the officers, staff and volunteers of the charity (and all separate legal entities owned and/or controlled by the charity).

5. Definitions

- 5.1. **Gifts:** something that is bestowed voluntarily, and without compensation, upon an individual or company – including, but not limited to, goods, money and gift cards.
- 5.2. **Hospitality:** the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors or strangers – including, but not limited to, the provision of travel, accommodation and refreshments.

6. Transparency and Accountability

- 6.1. As representatives of a charitable company, all those within the scope of this policy:
 - 6.1.1. Are required to abide by the highest ethical standards,
 - 6.1.2. Must act, and be seen to act, with complete honesty and integrity, and must not put themselves, or the charity, in a position where they could be accused of acting improperly,
 - 6.1.3. Should not accept any gifts or hospitality which might, or might reasonably appear to, compromise their professional judgement or integrity or place them under an improper obligation.

7. Responsibilities

- 7.1. **The Board of Trustees** has overall accountability for this policy.
- 7.2. **The CEO** is the policy owner and is responsible for ensuring the policy is adhered to.
- 7.3. **Managers** are responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented within their teams.
- 7.4. **All officers, staff, volunteers** must adhere to this policy at all times.

8. General Principles – Accepting Gifts

- 8.1. The acceptance of gifts from interested business parties, partners and other associates, could be presented as having created a conflict of interest that might, arguably, have compromised the impartiality of the recipient in the decisions taken in relation to their work.
- 8.2. Offers of gifts should be reported to your Line Manager.
- 8.3. It is not possible to put forward hard and fast rules for when gifts may be accepted, since in practice this will depend upon the circumstances, which will vary from one situation to another.
- 8.4. The general principles for the acceptance of gifts are:
 - 8.4.1. The gift must be of a nominal or notional value. Typically, a gift should not be accepted if the cumulative value from any one organisation or individual exceeds £50 in any 12-month period or £25 for any one gift.
 - 8.4.2. The gift must be given for an appropriate reason.
 - 8.4.3. The gift must be given at an appropriate time (e.g. not in advance of the issuing of an opinion or determination, or in advance of the award of a contract).
 - 8.4.4. The gift must be of a “one-off” or irregular nature (i.e. that could not be viewed as a regular source of income by HMRC for personal taxation purposes).
- 8.5. Examples of acceptable gifts could include a low value promotional item (such as a keyring, diary or pen), or a small token gift offered to mark an occasion (such as a small box of chocolates at Christmas).
- 8.6. In no circumstances may an individual sell an accepted gift for monetary gain.
- 8.7. The details of all gifts, whether accepted or declined, should be fully recorded in the **Gifts and Hospitality Register** (see Appendix), which will be maintained by the Administrator (low value, promotional items as outlined in section 8.5 are excluded from this requirement).

9. Exceptions to the General Principles for Accepting Gifts

- 9.1. The CEO may, in exceptional circumstances, override the above principles where the person who was offered the gift, can demonstrate that the needs of the charity justify it.

- 9.2. An example of when it might be appropriate to override the general principles for accepting gifts, could be where a grateful service user offers a gift and to refuse it would cause offence.
- 9.3. The CEO's approval of the acceptance of the gift should be sought as soon as the gift is offered.
- 9.4. The retention, by the recipient, of higher value accepted gifts is at the discretion of the CEO. In reaching a decision consideration should be given as to whether the gift should be put to another use (e.g. used in a charity raffle, shared amongst the wider organisation), and the risks to the reputation of the charity if the gift was retained by the recipient.

10. Making Gifts

- 10.1. Any charity representative wishing to make a gift must discuss it, in the first instance, with an appropriate member of the Senior Management Team.
- 10.2. If a Senior Manager considers it may be appropriate, in the circumstances, to give a gift, they must obtain the written approval of the CEO before proceeding.
- 10.3. The CEO will only approve the giving of a gift if, after taking account of the principles of probity, accountability and value for money, it is deemed appropriate.
- 10.4. The details of all gifts given, should be fully recorded in the **Gifts and Hospitality Register** (see Appendix), which will be maintained by the Administrator.

11. Gifts that are never acceptable

- 11.1. Gifts that are offered 'quid pro quo' (translation: something for something), should never be accepted or given. Gifts offered or given in exchange for something else are considered inappropriate in all situations.
- 11.2. Gifts should never be offered or accepted during contract negotiations.
- 11.3. Gifts to individuals in the form of cash and/or cash equivalent gift vouchers/cards are not allowed.

12. Accepting Hospitality – Genuine Business Reasons

- 12.1. It is recognised that charity representatives need to ensure good relationships with existing, and future, partners and stakeholders. This may involve the receipt of modest working lunches and dinners. These are acceptable where there is a genuine business need and do not need to be reported.
- 12.2. Hospitality is also acceptable, and does not need to be declared, where there is a direct link to working arrangements and a genuine business reason can be demonstrated, for example:
 - 12.2.1. Attending or speaking at a conference which provides complimentary subsistence, travel and modest accommodation,
 - 12.2.2. Attending a free training course,
 - 12.2.3. Attending a reception for the purposes of networking on behalf of the charity.

13. Accepting Hospitality – Other Considerations

- 13.1. Officers, staff and volunteers should not encourage interested business parties, partners and other associates to provide hospitality to them, or indirectly to other colleagues, friends or relatives.
- 13.2. Hospitality invitations to events which are for purely social reasons should be considered very carefully before being accepted as it may be much more difficult to substantiate a genuine business need.
- 13.3. If an officer, staff member or volunteer accepts an invitation to attend a social event, pays all associated costs of attending and takes holidays to attend – this should be acceptable. This should be recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register and must have the prior authorisation of CEO and/or Chair.
- 13.4. Officers, staff and volunteers must not accept free holidays, lavish meals, or tickets to exclusive events, from a current or potential contractor or partner. Invitations such as these should be declined and must be recorded in the Gifts and Hospitality Register.
- 13.5. Officers, staff and volunteers should be mindful, at all times, and should not accept hospitality of any kind which could be interpreted as a means of influencing the way in which they carry out their duties.

14. General Principles - Providing Hospitality

- 14.1. Value for money should be considered in the provision of all hospitality.
- 14.2. Costs should be kept to a minimum and itemised receipts must be provided.
- 14.3. It should be noted that under the **Staff Travel and Expenses Policy**, the charity will not usually meet the costs of any alcoholic drinks.
- 14.4. Hospitality should only be provided where it can be clearly demonstrated as necessary in furthering charity objectives for public benefit.
- 14.5. It is permissible to provide hospitality in the form of refreshments or working lunches for meetings with external stakeholders. However it should be noted that alcohol should never be provided as part of a working lunch.
- 14.6. In the vast majority of situations it is not considered appropriate to provide refreshments or working lunches at the charity's expense for internal meetings. However, where the provision of such can be demonstrated in terms of value for money in the pursuance of charity objectives then this may be permissible. The factors to be considered include the following:
 - 14.6.1. The location, scheduled length, and formality of the meeting. Where no refreshment or working lunch is provided, it may be considered disruptive for meetings, such as meetings scheduled to run for 2 or more hours, to be interrupted for attendees to arrange their own refreshments.
 - 14.6.2. The number of attendees. Where the cost of making tea for the number of attendees would exceed the cost of ordering from catering providers.
 - 14.6.3. The journey to and from a meeting by attendees. Where there is a long journey involved the provision of such refreshments or working lunches will facilitate a productive meeting.

15. Exceptions to the General Principles for Providing Hospitality

- 15.1. Generally the activities of the charity should not require hospitality additional to that prescribed in Section 15 above. If such a situation does arise, is essential to err on the side of caution and seek the permission of a senior manager before providing hospitality.
- 15.2. The charity may, on occasions, be expected to offer more than a working lunch for official visitors. In such situations, hospitality must be modest - special arrangements are acceptable only where business cannot be advanced by any other suitable means, or where failure to offer would cause offence or embarrassment.
- 15.3. In certain circumstances it may be appropriate to provide modest additional catering such as a restaurant dinner. On such occasions, it would be improper to invite other members of staff at the charity's expense (unless they were fulfilling an essential support function).
- 15.4. Generally it is not acceptable for managers to take their teams out for lunch or evening activity at the charity's expense. Exceptional cases may be considered for team building away days. Advance approval for such events should be sought from the CEO.