



## **North East Museums**

### **Employees - Interests and Gifts and Hospitality Policy**

Name of governing body: North East Museums Strategic Board

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# Employees - Interests and Gifts and Hospitality

## Guidenote on NEM and Newcastle City Council Policies.

Staff at North East Museums (NEM) are employed by Newcastle City Council (NCC). This means, all NEM employees are required to follow policies and procedures found or referenced within NCC's Employee Booklet. In addition to these, or in situations where circumstances dictate that a NEM-specific document is necessary (for example, where named NEM staff members must be included as points of contact), NEM has produced its own policies and procedures for employees to follow.

This Policy is one such example.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to explain the rules around personal interests and to set out restrictions placed on employees when offered a gift or hospitality, whilst working for or on behalf of NEM.

### Personal Interests

Individuals must not allow their outside activities (personal interests) to interfere with the work of NEM or to affect their ability to carry out their role effectively.

A 'conflict of interest' is considered to be any connection or association with a third party that is (or appears to be) against the best interests of NEM, or which could enable you to be reasonably suspected of using your position within NEM to gain an unfair advantage for or from a third party.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are not placed in a position that risks, or appears to risk, compromising your role or statutory duty. You should not be seen to be securing a personal benefit or valuable gift or hospitality by virtue of your job.

### Register of Employee Interests

The Employee Register of Interests is a corporate register which holds details of any financial or other interests that employees may have which could conflict or be seen as conflicting with NEM's interests. It forms part of NEM's arrangements for ensuring that we meet the highest standards when carrying out NEM's business.

### Questions to ask yourself:

- Am I, or might I be, in a position where I (or my family/friends) could gain from the connection between my private interests and my employment with NEM?
- Do I have access to information which could influence purchasing decisions?
- Could my outside interest be in any way detrimental to NEM or its users' interests?
- Do I have any other reason to think I may be risking a conflict of interest?
- Am I graded at N6 or above, and want/have a job in addition to my work with NEM?

If the answer to any of these is 'Yes' or 'Maybe' - **Declare it!**

## **There are five forms available for declaring Personal Interests:**

- Form CCE 1: Used to declare relationship with contractors or suppliers
- Form CCE 3: Used for approval of outside interests & employment
- Form CCE.4: Used for financial or non-financial interest which could conflict with NEM's interests
- Form CCE.5: Used if a member of staff has a financial interest in a NEM contract
- Form CCE.6: Used for membership of a secret society or organisation

## **There are two forms available for reporting offers of Gifts or Hospitality:**

- Form CCE.7: Used for declaring a gift offer and whether this has been accepted or refused
- Form CCE.8: Used to request the Director's approval before accepting any offer of hospitality

To declare an interest, or offer of gifts or hospitality, please complete the appropriate form(s) and forward to the Director's office.

These forms are available from the Interests, Gifts and Hospitality Folder on NEM Sharepoint:  
<https://twmuseums.sharepoint.com/:f:/r/Policies%20%20Procedures/Corporate%20Policies/Interests,%20Gifts%20and%20Hospitality?csf=1&web=1&e=gBlhhH>

## **Gifts and Hospitality**

In the normal course of undertaking your job you may be offered small gifts or hospitality. Gifts (defined as items given without the expectation of receiving anything in return) should not be accepted where they could reasonably be construed as an inducement to affect a business decision. If you are offered gifts or other benefits (or family/friends are offered gifts) arising from your official duties, this could cause a conflict between your private and public duties.

In general, an employee should treat any offer of gifts or hospitality if it is made to them personally with extreme caution.

The following guidance notes are designed to ensure that as a result of the offer, you do not put yourself or NEM at any risk.

## **Refusing Gifts**

An employee should:

- Not receive any reward or fee other than their salary;
- Not accept monetary gifts of any kind, whether cash, cheques or vouchers;
- Not accept a gift from any one organisation or individual if the value exceeds £25;
- Always refuse offers of gifts or hospitality from organisations or persons who provide work, goods or services to NEM, or who require a decision from NEM;
- Declare any offer of a gift on form: CCE.7, even if they have refused it;
- Report any offer of a gift to their line manager.

## **Accepting Gifts**

A gift may be accepted if is of token value up to a maximum of £25. A gift will be considered 'token' if by virtue of its nature or branding it has no material commercial value, that is to say, no unrelated third party would reasonably be expected to purchase the item for a sum in excess of £25.

The list below sets out the types of gifts which staff may be offered and would likely be considered as being of token value.

Water Bottles	Reusable Coffee Cups	Calendars
Diaries	Stationery	Badges
Key Rings	Coasters	Ties/Scarves
Desk Organisers	Commemorative Books	Baseball Caps
Pens	Umbrellas	Biscuits/Chocolates

Employees must always record the reason for accepting any gift using form: CCE.7.

## **Exceptions**

There may be certain exceptional situations where refusing a gift may be difficult. For example, if a gift is simply delivered to your place of work, there may be a problem returning it, or if the refusal of a gift may cause cultural offence to the person offering it.

In such situations it may be possible to accept a gift on behalf of NEM, rather than as an individual – for example to share amongst a whole team or to include in a raffle for NEM fundraising.

In such situations, if the item is not considered of token value, the Director's approval should be sought as soon as the gift is offered. If in doubt, speak to your Line Manager in the first instance.

## **Hospitality**

Careful consideration should be given to offers of hospitality. Offers that could reasonably be construed to give the impression that the officer is being inappropriately influenced should be refused. Public perception is important and this guidance is designed to protect you whilst you are carrying out the duties of your job.

Offers of hospitality are common in some fields and it would not be practical or necessary to refuse every offer. Details of these circumstances and guidelines for officers in dealing with offers are set out below:

The permission of the Director should be sought before accepting any hospitality using form CCE.8 unless specific provision is made for it in this policy;

- Light refreshments (e.g. tea, coffee, biscuits, sandwiches) provided as part of an acceptable event (e.g. working lunch, exhibition launch) are acceptable and do not need to be registered;

- Any officer receiving an invitation to dinner or a more formal event, should request the Director's permission before responding. This can include dinner, a concert or a sporting event;
- Consideration should be given to who is making the offer, what is their relationship to NEM, and whether it is likely that they will want something from NEM;
- The timing of the offer could be significant. If the offer comes from someone who is expecting any sort of decision from NEM (i.e. contract, grant) the offer should be refused.

**Questions to ask yourself:**

- Is it reasonable to expect that NEM be represented at the event? If so, is the officer the appropriate person to represent NEM? Would it be more appropriate for the Director, a Senior Manager, or the Chair of the Strategic Board/Development Trust/NEM Enterprises to be present?
- Is it necessary for the officer to be present to receive information of use to NEM or to give information on behalf of NEM?
- Will the officer be the only invitee? If so, the invitation should normally be refused.
- Is the hospitality too generous for the event? There is a danger that such offers could be perceived as an attempt to influence.

If you are in any doubt as to whether you should accept the offer of hospitality– **Request Approval** from the Director, using form CCE.8