



**London City**  
*audit consortium*

**Homerton University Hospital NHS  
Foundation Trust**

**Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship  
Policy**

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<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Page 3</b>
<b>Policy statement</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Scope of Policy</b>	<b>Page 4</b>
<b>Casual gifts</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Hospitality of a non-commercial nature</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>Provision of light refreshments and working meals</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
<b>Commercial sponsorship – hospitality and meetings</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>Authorisation</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>Supply</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>Review of Policy</b>	<b>Page 8</b>
<b>Appendix 1 – Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship form</b>	<b>Page 9</b>

## Introduction

This policy sets out the standards of conduct in relation to the acceptance of hospitality and gifts.

‘Hospitality’ can refer to a wide range of activities, but for current purposes it can broadly be considered as:

- A gift of money, goods or services or combination of these
- A loan of money, goods or services or combination of these
- The receipt of beneficial terms that is not generally available regarding the purchase or lease of goods or services.

‘Goods’ include vehicles or any type of equipment. ‘Services’ includes invitations to events, travel, accommodation or work carried out.

This document should be read in conjunction with the Standards of Business Conduct Policy, part of the Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust’s Corporate Governance Framework and in addition, the Trust’s own ‘Good Practice Guide for Partnership working with the Pharmaceutical Industry’. These set out standards of behaviour expected of staff in relation to the above.

## Policy Statement

The Policy of the Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is governed by the Corporate Governance rules, and is that:

- Hospitality should not generally be accepted
- Where exceptionally, an individual believes there is a case for acceptance, appropriate approval must be obtained.
- Where approval is granted, any hospitality received with a significant value must be recorded in the Register of Gifts, Hospitality and Sponsorship.

**It should be noted that the current limit is set at £25, however staff may be required to explain any acceptance of any gift, hospitality or sponsorship.**

## Scope of Policy

This Policy applies to all staff groups, regardless of grade or profession, employed by the Trust including part time staff, locums, volunteers and those on fixed term and temporary contracts.

It is the responsibility of senior staff to ensure that all employees follow this policy. Staff should be aware that disciplinary action may be taken where there is a breach of this policy.

It should also be noted that under the Prevention of Corruption Acts, 1906 and 1916, it is an offence for employees corruptly to accept any gifts or consideration as an inducement or reward for:

- Doing, or refraining from doing, anything in their official capacity; or
- Showing favour or disfavour to any person in their official capacity e.g. placing a contract for goods and services with a person or organisation.

Breaching the above Acts renders staff liable to loss of employment and pension rights in the NHS, prosecution, fine and possible imprisonment.

The Trust's Whistleblowing policy encourages staff not to turn a blind eye or to remain silent but to accept their responsibilities for the Trust's interests and to voice genuinely held concerns about Fraud and Corruption. All instances of fraud and corruption will be dealt with in accordance with the Trust's Fraud and Corruption Policy.

Where, collaborative partnerships involve a pharmaceutical company, persons should also be aware of the requirements of the Medical (Advertising) Regulations Act 1994 (regulation 21 'Inducements and hospitality').

Specific issues may arise where there are opportunities for the Trust or the individual employees to enter into cooperative arrangements with pharmaceutical companies. Where such opportunities are considered, the following guidelines should be observed:

- The partnership activity should support the overall objectives and Priorities of the Trust
- These activities should show tangible benefits to individual patient Management
- The work should support the activities and decisions of the Trust
- The overall aim of the partnership should be considered and take account of the need for probity and transparency
- The agreement should take account of the programme's clinical effectiveness and of the strict requirements regarding patient confidentiality.
- Any benefits obtained should be documented in the Hospitality Register where appropriate
- Proposed arrangements with Pharmaceutical companies will be considered by the Chief Executive and the Board Members

### **Casual Gifts**

Casual gifts, offered by contractors or others, should be politely but firmly declined if it is thought that it would constitute an offence under the above acts.

It is in order for staff to accept small tokens to a value of £25. This may include items of low intrinsic value such as diaries or calendars, or small tokens of gratitude from patients or their relatives.

**It should be noted that the current limit is set at £25, however staff may be required to explain any acceptance of any gift, hospitality or sponsorship.**

In cases of doubt staff should either consult their line manager or politely decline acceptance.

Whether a gift is accepted or not accepted the employee's line manager should be informed and the offer recorded within two weeks on the Trust's gift notification form, which should then be submitted to Director of Finance's Department.

### **Hospitality of a non-commercial nature**

Modest hospitality provided it is normal and reasonable in the circumstances, e.g. lunches in the course of working visits, may be acceptable, though it should be similar to the scale of hospitality which the NHS as an employer would be likely to offer.

Staff should decline all other offers hospitality or entertainment. If in doubt they should seek advice from their line manager.

### **Provision of Light Refreshment and Working Meals**

Light refreshments (biscuits, tea, coffee and other non-alcoholic drinks) and working meals should only be provided to participants in meetings, if the following criteria are met:

- The meeting is held in relation to Trust business and attendees are present in that capacity;
- The meeting is scheduled to last for more than two hours within the normal working day (light refreshment); or
- Participants are involved in a series of back to back meetings which in total last longer than two hours (light refreshment); or
- The meeting is scheduled to last for more than one and a half hours and fall wholly or partially outside the normal working day (light refreshment);
- There is a minimum of 4 people attending;

Working meals should not be provided immediately before or after a meeting. Where considered essential, they should be limited to a buffet/sandwich type meal. The meeting must unavoidably continue through the normal lunch period noon – 2pm.

## Commercial Sponsorship – Hospitality and Meetings

As a general rule, sponsorship arrangements involving the Trust should be at a corporate, rather than individual level, but these guidelines will include any member of the Trust staff working under NHS terms and conditions and receiving sponsorship from agencies and/or commercial industry.

Agency/Industry representatives organising meetings are permitted to provide appropriate hospitality and/or meet any reasonable, actual costs, which may be incurred

Hospitality must be secondary to the purpose of the meeting.

The level of hospitality offered must be appropriate to the occasion; and the costs involved must not exceed that level which the recipients would normally adopt when paying for themselves or that which could be reciprocated by the Trust.

It should not be extended beyond those whose role makes it appropriate for them to attend the meeting.

Any meeting sponsored must be disclosed in papers relating to the meeting and any published proceeding

In all instances of being offered gifts or hospitality or where any individual benefits from sponsored hospitality, a form should be completed showing:

- The nature of the goods/hospitality/sponsorship offered
- The approximate value (where this is unknown an estimate should be included in all cases)
- The person/organisation offering the goods
- Date of the offer
- Action taken (accepted/declined) plus supporting information

The form should be reviewed by the employee's line manager, and then sent to the Trust's Director of Finance within 2 weeks of the offer.

## **Authorisation**

Only Clinical/Corporate Directors, Operations/Budget Managers and General Managers may approve the provision of hospitality. An application form must be completed prior to the ordering of hospitality. Commercial sponsorship provided by pharmaceutical companies must be authorised by the Chief Executive and the Board Members.

## **Supply**

Catering must be ordered through the Catering Department at the site on which the meeting is to be held. To order catering a 'Catering function request form' duly signed by an authorised signatory should be forwarded to the Catering Department at least 24 hours prior to the date of the meeting.

## **Review of Policy**

The Trust will periodically review this Policy with Staff Side to ensure that it is effective. The first initial review of this Policy will be two years from implementation.

**Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust**

**REGISTER OF GIFTS / HOSPITALITY / SPONSORSHIP**

Staff Name.....

Job Title:.....

Description of Gift/Hospitality\*/Sponsorship Offered (please include approximate value):

.....

Offered By .....

Date of Offer .....20.....

Action Taken: Accepted / Declined  
(please give any supporting information/reasons below):

.....

Signed:..... Date.....20.....

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**MANAGER REVIEW :**

Please delete as applicable:

I have reviewed the gift/hospitality\*/sponsorship recorded above. I consider the action taken to be reasonable/I have taken the following action with regard to the matter:

.....

Signed:.....Date.....20.....

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**CHIEF EXECUTIVE / DIRECTOR OF FINANCE REVIEW :**

I have reviewed the gift/hospitality\*/sponsorship recorded above. I consider the action taken to be reasonable/I have taken the following action with regard to the matter:

.....

Signed:.....Date.....20.....

\*Please note that hospitality declared on this form would be defined as an offer to be taken for a meal or entertainment.