

# **SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP**

**GROUP ETHICS POLICY**  
**JUNE 2024**

# SCIENCE MUSEUM GROUP GROUP ETHICS POLICY

UPDATED JUNE 2024

## 1. CONTEXT

The Science Museum Group (“SMG”) is governed by the National Heritage Act 1983, as well as UK and international law, and respects the professional and ethical principles that cover all internal and external relationships with regard to SMG being a public sector and charitable body, as well as a cultural, academic, scientific and educational institution.

This policy applies to all representatives of SMG, paid or otherwise, including:

- Staff
- Trustees
- Volunteers
- Advisors

## 2. PRINCIPLES AND BEHAVIOURS

SMG’s principal aim and statutory purpose is to care for, preserve and add to the collection that we hold for public benefit. SMG therefore has a duty to be transparent, accountable and to always act in the public interest.

SMG depends on the trust and confidence of all those with whom SMG and its subsidiaries come into contact with in order to fulfil its purpose. This trust and confidence depends on SMG’s reputation for acting ethically, with integrity and to the highest professional standards.

All representatives of SMG, paid or otherwise, are expected to act in accordance with the following behaviours:

- Honesty (not to mislead)
- Integrity
- Impartiality
- Mutual respect
- Avoids personal gain
- Avoids conflict of interest

All representatives of SMG, paid or otherwise, are expected to understand their responsibilities and follow appropriate policies and procedures as set out in the Code of Conduct for SMG Staff (2013), *Code of Best Practice for Members of the Board of Trustees* (2011, Cabinet Office) and the *Seven Principles of Public Life* (Nolan Committee, March 1996).

### **3. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

In furtherance of these principles all trustees and senior staff of SMG shall make known to the SMG Chair or Director (as appropriate) any:

- Actual, potential or perceived conflict between their own and SMG's interests;
- Actual, potential or perceived pecuniary interests (including fundraising or investment dealing) of theirs or of any member of their close family or friends which may be, or perceived to be, in conflict with the interests of SMG;
- Actual, potential or perceived conflicts between the interests of SMG and any relevant private entity.

SMG will maintain registers of interests for all trustees, directors and senior staff.

### **4. COLLECTION**

All representatives of SMG are expected to follow appropriate procedures as set out in the SMG Human Remains Policy, Collection Development Policy, Conservation Policy and Collection Information & Access Policy.

In summary, the ethical provisions in these policies state that SMG will:

- Undertake due diligence to acquire valid title and satisfaction that an item has been acquired or borrowed in compliance with the laws of each country through which it has passed;
- Reject any items that have been illicitly collected or traded as defined in cultural property legislation, or natural conservation legislation;
- Comply with legislation and guidance for the care of human remains in museums;
- Use and report upon the National Museum Directors' Conference 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Holocaust and World War II period: Statement of Principles and Proposed Actions';
- Obtain and observe all statutory licences and permits necessary to comply with legislation and regulations to hold and use an item in the collection, including those for licensed collections and hazardous materials;
- Care for, conserve and use items in the collection securely and appropriately, and reduce natural deterioration, as far as reasonably practicable;
- Establish sound curatorial reasons before consideration is given to the disposal of any item in the collection, and not undertake disposal principally for financial reasons, except in exceptional circumstances.

## 5. FUNDRAISING

All representatives of SMG are expected to follow the *Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice* and the *Charity Commission's Protecting Charities from Harm: Compliance Toolkit* as well as relevant internal policies and procedures.

SMG actively seeks to work in partnership with external organisations and individuals to achieve shared objectives. To ensure SMG only solicits, accepts and stewards gifts from acceptable sources, and to protect SMG from reputational and legal risks (including fraud, money laundering and other financial crime), it maintains a due diligence process which is outlined in Appendix A. SMG will take reasonable and appropriate steps to know who its donors are, particularly where significant sums are being donated or the circumstances of the donation give rise to notable risk.

There may be occasions when SMG will have to turn down opportunities of external funding, including gifts in kind and objects, where SMG believes that acceptance could have a significant detrimental effect on its reputation or where there are legal concerns about the donation:

- SMG will not accept donations, sponsorship or grants made anonymously through an intermediary who is not prepared to identify the donor to SMG. SMG should avoid agreeing to requests for anonymity that conceal a conflict of interest, real or perceived, or that raise other ethical concerns.
- SMG will not accept donations, sponsorship or grants where the donor has acted, or believed to have acted, illegally in the acquisition of funds or where there are concerns of fraud, money laundering or other financial crime. SMG will report all serious incidents (both actual or alleged) to the Charity Commission, police, National Fraud Authority or HMRC as required.
- SMG will not seek or accept donations, sponsorship or grants where acceptance of these funds would damage its effective operation, including:
  - Harm to SMG's duty to other benefactors, partners, visitors or stakeholders;
  - Creation of conflict of interest;
  - Material damage to the reputation, independence or integrity of SMG;
  - Impacting SMG's ability to fulfil its mission in any way, including interference in the editorial freedom of SMG in its exhibitions and programmes.

In general, any sponsor, donor or grantor should appreciate and support SMG's values, mission and objectives. SMG will recognise donor, sponsor or grantor support according to agreed standards, generally based on the level of support received. SMG reserves the right to consult and take advice from any relevant individual, company or organisation in the development of a gallery, exhibition, event or other cultural offering, including from sponsors, donors and partners, whilst always maintaining editorial freedom. Where SMG has applied for grants from an organisation, it will fulfil the terms and conditions of that grant.

## 6. INTERNATIONAL

Science is an international endeavour and the big issues that face humanity as individuals, as communities and as nations, are global in scale; SMG must reflect this. As the UK's national museum of science and industry, SMG also has a role to play in promoting our cities, regions and the UK abroad.

SMG works in partnership with many external organisations and bodies in order to fulfil its vision and mission, as described in the Inspiring Futures 2022-2030. Collaborative relationships may or may not involve financial transactions or interests. In deciding where to work and with which bodies, SMG will adhere to the principles set out in this policy. The Inspiring Futures 2024-2026 will be available on the Group website from July 2024. As a Non-Departmental Public Body, the principle of operating at arms-length from government will be observed; however, government advice will be considered, including official guidance from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The safety and wellbeing of SMG personnel is also a priority and risk assessments will apply to overseas travel in the usual way.

Concerns about ethical issues arising from SMG international activity (including in relation to the UK Bribery Act 2010) should be raised with the Director of Global Engagement in the first instance, who will decide whether referral to the SMG Director is necessary.

## 7. COMMERCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

SMG enters into a variety of commercial arrangements and activities with a wide range of partner institutions, companies and individuals including, but not limited to, the hiring out of venues and spaces from across the SMG estate. The principle of impartiality will apply to all such arrangements irrespective of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, religion or belief, marriage and civil partnership or in relation to pregnancy or maternity.

Any such commercial arrangement or activity in and of itself does not represent an endorsement of the aims, goals or principles of the partner organisation. Partners cannot use any SMG museum logo or any elements of its brand identity in any of its advertising or publicity for the event without the prior written approval of SMG; the partner will also ensure that advertising and publicity material does not imply that the commercial activity event is endorsed, supported or organised by SMG without the prior written approval of SMG.

SMG takes steps to ensure that its commercial activities are performed in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 with the actions SMG takes set out in its Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement available on its website. SMG also takes steps, and provides internal training, to meet the requirements of the Bribery Act 2010.

SMG reserves the right, at its own discretion, to refuse a booking in exceptional circumstances including but not limited to:

- The commercial arrangement or activity bring, or is perceived to bring, SMG into significant disrepute;
- Partners or their guests may behave, or be anticipated to behave, in a way that would put our collections at risk or constitute a breach of the law or cause a nuisance;
- Partners seek to sell tickets for the activity without the prior written approval of SMG;
- The activity aims to achieve public profile through press or marketing that takes advantage of SMG's status and reputation or is otherwise perceived to be seeking to exploit SMG's reputation, without the express permission of SMG;
- The activity will adversely impact museum visitors or put SMG collections at risk;
- The activity breaches government guidelines for arm's length bodies, for example around impartiality.

An outline of the escalation route and decision-making process for commercial events bookings is included in Appendix B.

# APPENDIX A: DUE DILIGENCE PROCESS

## 1. BACKGROUND

SMG seeks and encourages funding from a range of sources including individuals, companies, charitable trusts and foundations and statutory funders.

Relationships with funders should be subject to prior and continuing consideration in order to assess any legal or reputational risks arising from association with an individual or organisation, and to confirm that partnering with the funder would be consistent with SMG's overall objectives.

This policy and process conforms with the 'Know Your Donor' principles set out by the Charity Commission. This stipulates that trustees should take reasonable and appropriate steps to know who the charity's donors are, particularly where significant sums are being donated or the circumstances of the donation give rise to notable risk. Due diligence should ensure that trustees take reasonable steps to:

- Identify: know who they are dealing with
- Verify: where reasonable, and the risks are high, verify identities
- Know what the organisation's or individual's business is and can be assured this is appropriate for the charity to be involved with
- Know what their specific business is with the charity and have confidence they will deliver what the charity wants them to
- Watch out for unusual or suspicious activities, conducts or requests.

(From Charity Commission '*Compliance toolkit: protecting charities from harm*')

The aim of due diligence is to:

- Assess any risks to SMG that may arise from accepting a donation
- Ensure that it is appropriate for SMG to accept money from a particular donor
- Have assurance that the donation is not from any illegal or inappropriate source
- Ensure that any conditions that may be attached to a donation are appropriate and can be accepted.

Careful review of proposed and on-going relationships is required firstly to allow us to be alert to potential illegal activity including fraud and money laundering, and secondly to mitigate the risk of ethical issues causing damage to SMG's reputation, reducing its ability to secure funding and to develop beneficial relationships in the future.

Responsibility for the due diligence process rests with the Fundraising & Partnerships Department, reporting to the Director of Fundraising & Partnerships.

## **2. WHAT SHOULD DUE DILIGENCE INCLUDE, WHEN IS THE PROCESS ACTIVATED AND WHO DOES IT?**

Due diligence research will be carried out by the Prospect Development team within the Fundraising & Partnerships Department. The due diligence process is triggered when we are considering making a request for funding of £50k or more or where SMG receives an unsolicited donation of £50k or more. This applies whether the funding is to be received in a single payment or spread over a longer time period. The due diligence process will be triggered at a lower level if we are alerted to specific risks.

When income is received, further checks will be carried out to ensure we are satisfied that the payment method and conditions attached to the donation are legitimate and do not give rise to any concerns.

### **2.1 DUE DILIGENCE RESEARCH WILL INCLUDE:**

- A summary of our existing relationship
- Gift information – where is the money coming from, how much and what for
- Source of wealth/income (employment history for individuals)
- Negative press (highlighting any areas for concern)
- Giving history and associations with affiliated organisations

### **2.2 REFERRAL PROCESS**

Due Diligence research is reviewed by the Director of Fundraising & Partnerships in the first instance who will assess and decide if they will refer to the SMG Partnership Panel, a subcommittee and advisory body of the Board of Trustees, which may then refer the matter to the Board. For reports referred to the Board of Trustees any final decision as to what further actions shall be taken with regards to such a matter shall be at the sole discretion of the Board of Trustees, who shall have due regard to this policy in arriving at such decision.

If at any point any staff member has concerns that the donation may be suspicious, they must report this to the Director of Fundraising & Partnerships immediately. If the Director of Fundraising & Partnerships judges the concerns to be valid in line with the Charity Commission's guidance on identifying suspicious donations, they will alert the trustees who must inform the relevant authorities as set out in the Charity Commission's "How to report a serious incident in your charity" guidelines.

### **2.3 REVIEW OF DUE DILIGENCE**

Due diligence is considered valid for a period of 12 months after it has been approved. Due diligence for multi-year partnerships will automatically be updated after 12 months for the lifetime of the partnership and the SMG Partnership Panel will review these updates as required.



# APPENDIX B: COMMERCIAL EVENTS BOOKINGS

1. Events team deal with initial booking enquiry and escalate to Events Sales Manager in the first instance;
2. Events Sales Manager reviews booking enquiry and refers to Group Head of Catering and Events should they have any concerns;
3. Group Head refers to Commercial Operations Director who will assess and decide if a referral to the SMG Chief Operating Officer is necessary;
4. If necessary, the SMG Chief Operating Officer will escalate to the SMG Director;
5. Event booking is accepted or rejected accordingly.