



North East Museums

Ethics Policy

Name of governing body:

North East Museums Strategic Board

Other Bodies signed up to policy:

TWAM Development Trust

TWAM Enterprises Ltd

Exhibitions by TWAM Ltd

Date of approval: 18.07.2024

Date for review: July 2027

Introduction

North East Museums endorses the seven principles of public life, as set out in Standards in Public Life: the First Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (1995), chaired by Lord Nolan. The principles apply to all who work in or for archives and museums and to all who serve on our governing bodies (see Appendix 1).

This policy sets the standards of conduct which North East Museums expects from its “representatives”, including elected members, all paid employees and workers, volunteers, board and committee members, associated bodies (for example Friends” groups) and contractors working on North East Museums premises. It also covers suppliers and those providing services under a contract with North East Museums in their own premises. It aims to safeguard the reputation of the North East Museums Group: North East Museums, TWAM Development Trust, TWAM Enterprises and Exhibitions by TWAM. This Group shall be henceforth referred to in this Policy as ‘North East Museums’, unless otherwise stated.

This Policy is supplemented by the following:

- North East Museums Anti-Corruption Policy
- North East Museums Confidential Reporting Policy
- North East Museums Collection Development Policies
- North East Museums Interests, Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- North East Museums Group Privacy Notices
- Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- NCC Data Protection Policy
- NCC Equal Opportunities Policy
- General Data Protection Regulation
- Data Protection Act 2018

Overarching Principles

Our mission is to welcome and connect people to the past, present and future of the North East through stories, shared spaces and experiences.

The success of North East Museums depends on the trust and confidence of all those with whom we come into contact with. All representatives of North East Museums must recognise the public purpose of archives and museums and must uphold the highest standards of personal conduct and corporate integrity expected in public service.

It is expected that in all actions, activities and relationships North East Museums representatives will act with the highest standard of integrity and professionalism and strive at all times to avoid acting in such a way as would, accidentally or otherwise, bring North East Museums into disrepute.

Of paramount importance is the simple principle:

No individual should use their position in North East Museums for personal gain or to benefit another at the expense of North East Museums, its mission, its reputation, or the public which it serves, nor should any individual act in a way that could reasonably be seen by others as compromising the independence and integrity of North East Museums.

North East Museums will proactively work to ensure that all goods, works and services it procures are sourced ethically in terms of both the way that North East Museums procures and in terms of the standards that we expect our suppliers, service providers and contractors to meet.

Conduct

In all dealings North East Museums expects all representatives to:

- Act with honesty and integrity, and never knowingly mislead any person;
- Recognise and acknowledge the contributions of others to the work and support of North East Museums;
- Protect confidential information obtained during their work and follow the guidelines of the GDPR, Data Protection Act 2018 and North East Museums Privacy Notices;
- Be impartial, - for example, declare and make known any personal interests, do not give or receive inducements which could be, or could be seen to be, in conflict with the interests of North East Museums;
- Understand their responsibilities and obligations to uphold the public trust;
- Follow appropriate policies and procedures;
- Make known to their line manager any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest by following the guidance in the Interests, Gifts and Hospitality Policy;

North East Museums will maintain registers of interests for all Elected Members, Board Members, Trustees, and senior employees (Grade N6 or above).

Professional codes of ethics

Within the areas in which North East Museums works there are specific codes of ethics covering areas of activity (for example, but not exclusively, museums, archives, fundraising or commercial activity). In some cases these are maintained by the relevant professional bodies. North East Museums will have reference to these codes of ethics and, where appropriate, the Strategic Board will formally adopt them.

As a museum service:

North East Museums recognises its role as a public-facing, collections-based institution that preserves and transmits knowledge, culture and history for past, present and future generations. For these purposes, North East Museums recognises and upholds the Code of Ethics for museums endorsed by the Museums Association in relation to:

1. Public engagement and public benefit:
 - Actively engage and work in partnership with existing audiences and reach out to new and diverse audiences;
 - Treat everyone equally, with honesty and respect;
 - Provide and generate accurate information for and with the public;
 - Support freedom of speech and debate;
 - Use collections for public benefit – for learning, inspiration and enjoyment;

- Consider partnerships with external organisations carefully, and how association with an organisation will be perceived by the public.
- 2. Stewardship of collections:
 - Maintain and develop collections for current and future generations;
 - Acquire, care for, exhibit and loan collections with transparency and competency in order to generate knowledge and engage the public with collections;
 - Follow North East Museums' published suite of Collections Development policies as well as specific policies such as those for the care of human remains, sacred objects and repatriation;
 - Treat museum collections as cultural, scientific or historic assets, not financial assets.
- 3. Individual and institutional integrity:
 - Act in the public interest in all areas of work;
 - Uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct at all times;
 - Build respectful and transparent relationships with partner organisations, governing bodies, and volunteers to ensure public trust in the museum's activities.

<http://www.museumsassociation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics>

As an archives service

North East Museums recognises its role to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct expected of archivists, archive conservators, records managers and those occupied in related activities. It does so in line with standards expected by the Archives and Records Association of the UK and Ireland, in relation to:

- Protect the integrity of archival material, that it continues to be reliable evidence of the past;
- Appraise, select and maintain archival material in its historical, legal and administrative context;
- Protect the authenticity of documents during processing, preservation and use;
- Ensure the continuing accessibility and intelligibility of records and archival materials;
- Record, and be able to justify actions on records and archival material;
- Promote the widest possible access to archival material and provide an impartial service to all users;
- Respect both access and privacy, and act within the boundaries of relevant legislation;
- Avoid using their position to unfairly benefit themselves or others;
- Systematically and continuously updating professional knowledge, and sharing the results of research and experience;
- Promote the preservation and use of the world's documentary heritage, through working co-operatively with the members of their own and other professions.
- Take account of the impact of their actions and activities on the environment, seeking to minimise adverse effects and advocate for environmental sustainability when appropriate / whenever possible to do so.

<https://www.archives.org.uk/ara-code-of-ethics>

As a Fundraising body

All representatives of North East Museums 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.

North East Museums and TWAMDT will not accept funds in circumstances when:

- The donation is made through an intermediary who is not prepared to identify the donor to anyone at North East Museums, except where:
 - The intermediary is an accredited body, e.g. the community foundation, or representative philanthropic body, can be deemed to have carried out appropriate checks themselves;
 - North East Museums has a positive long-standing relationship with the intermediary, or has carried out due diligence on the intermediary, and can confirm that they support North East Museums' mission, vision and strategic aims and are consistent with our overall values;
- The donor has acted, or is believed to have acted, illegally in the acquisition of funds; or,
- When acceptance of the funds would, in the judgment of the TWAM Development Trust Board of Trustees, having taken the advice of the Director where appropriate, significantly damage the effective operation of North East Museums in delivering its mission, whether because such acceptance would:
 - Harm North East Museums' relationship with other benefactors, partners, visitors or stakeholders;
 - Create unacceptable conflicts of interest;
 - Leave North East Museums open to accusations of money laundering;
 - Materially damage the reputation of North East Museums; or,
 - Detrimentally affect the ability of North East Museums to fulfil its mission in any other way than is mentioned above.

Fundraising will generally be undertaken on behalf of the Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums Development Trust (TWAMDT). It was established on 1 December 2010 and is registered as a company limited by guarantee (number 7334262) and is registered with the Charity Commission under charity number 1137867.

TWAMDT carries out its objectives by raising funds from individual donors, trusts and foundations and business sponsors, in order to help North East Museums achieve its mission, vision and strategic aims. To ensure North East Museums only solicits, accepts and stewards donations from legitimate and acceptable sources, TWAM Development Trust maintains a process for fundraising and due diligence.

Donation asks must be authorised and accepted according to the table below. Due diligence will be undertaken on any gift over £1,000 before it can be accepted. Further detail on the due diligence process is outlined in Appendix 2.

Total Donation	Agreement to Proceed	Authorisation and acceptance by
Up to £1,000	Relevant Leadership Lead	Communications & Development Manager
Between £1,000 – £50,000	Relevant Leadership Lead	Head of Finance, Governance & Resources
£50,000-£500,000	Relevant Leadership Lead	Director
Over £500,000	Director	North East Museums Strategic Board / TWAM DT Board

In general, any sponsor, donor or grantor should appreciate and support North East Museums' values, mission and objectives. North East Museums will recognise donor, sponsor or grantor support according to agreed standards, generally based on the level of support received.

Where a donor seeks to donate collection items these will only be accepted in line with North East Museums' Collection Development policies. Where a donor offers to donate an item or asset to TWAM Development Trust with permission to sell, North East Museums will first confirm, in writing, that the item is not appropriate for accessioning. North East Museums will also confirm whether it may be more appropriate for accessioning by a different museum outside of North East Museums and if appropriate introduce the donor to that organisation. Written confirmation that the asset is to be sold will be obtained from the donor of permission/intention for the asset to be sold in support of North East Museums. TWAM Development Trust will not take long term ownership of assets.

<https://www.fundraisingregulator.org.uk/code>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/protecting-charities-from-harm-compliance-toolkit>

As a Commercial Enterprise

TWAM Enterprises Limited (TWAME) was established on 1 May 2018 and is registered with Companies House under company number 10940488. TWAME manages commercial activities for North East Museums including retailing and management of catering and venue hire.

In order to fulfil these activities, TWAME enters into a variety of commercial arrangements with a wide range of partner organisations, companies, suppliers and individuals (Partners), including but not limited to the hiring out of venues and spaces across North East Museums Venues.

The principle of impartiality will apply to TWAME in all such arrangements, irrespective of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, creed, range of ability, language or religious belief. 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 North East Museums museum logo or any elements of its brand identity in any of its advertising or publicity for an event without the prior written approval of North East Museums. The Partner will also ensure that advertising and publicity material does not imply that the commercial activity event is endorsed, supported or organised by North East Museums without the prior written approval.

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

- the commercial arrangement or activity brings, or is perceived to bring, North East Museums or TWAME into disrepute because the Partner's activities are criminal or illegal
- Partners or their guests may behave, or be anticipated to behave, in a way that would disrupt the normal operation of the museum, affect museum visitors or 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 TWAME or North East Museums
- the event aims to achieve public profile through press or marketing that takes advantage of North East Museums' status and reputation, or is otherwise perceived to be seeking to exploit North East Museums' reputation, without the express permission of North East Museums.
- the event is scheduled to take place during the pre-election period (known as 'purdah') during which councils should "not publish any material which, in whole or in part, appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party"
- the event would conflict (or may be perceived as such) with any of North East Museums' own objectives or activities

If the individual taking the booking has any concerns, they will raise with TWAM Enterprises Commercial Manager in the first instance, who will discuss with the venue manager and escalate to the Director of TWAM if required. If the Director has any concerns, he will refer to the TWAM Enterprises Board of Directors or TWAM Strategic Board, as appropriate, for a final decision.

Appendix 1

The Nolan Principles - the 7 principles of public life

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7principles-of-public-life--2>

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Appendix 2: Due Diligence Process

TWAMDT 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 confirm that they support North East Museums' mission, vision and strategic aims and are consistent with our overall objectives.

Careful review of proposed and on-going relationships is required to mitigate the risk of ethical issues causing damage to North East Museums' reputation, reducing our ability to secure funding and reducing our capacity to develop beneficial relationships in the future.

Our threshold for the due diligence process to be activated is £1,000. The due diligence process will be triggered at a lower level if we are alerted to specific risks.

What should due diligence include, when is the process activated and who does it?

Due diligence research will be carried out by North East Museums' Development team, using the Due Diligence Report form below. The due diligence procedure is activated when we are considering making a request for, or receive funds of £1,000 or above.

Process

1. Development researcher to carry out a due diligence check on a potential funder once they are close to ask stage and they meet the threshold criteria (£1,000 - The due diligence process will be triggered at a lower level if we are alerted to specific risks).
2. Fundraiser to fill out of Due Diligence report
3. The report goes to the Communications & Development Manager in the first instance who will assess and escalate to the Head of Finance, Governance & Resources and the Director.
4. This trail will be recorded on NXT as follows:
 - Date of request for due diligence and name of fundraiser requesting the report
 - Date referred to the Communications & Development Manager
 - Date referred to Head of Finance, Governance & Resources and Director
 - Date of decision
 - A record of whether the decision to accept funds was approved or rejected

North East Museums

Due Diligence Report

Note: A record of the decision to accept or refuse the gift should be recorded on NXT with a summary of the rationale and where applicable, links to external sources. Any data gathered during the process, not included in the NXT record of the decision, should be deleted / destroyed within 30 days.

Date:

Individual donor or business name:

Company Number:

Business address:

Gift information (where is it coming from, amount, what for):

Key facts (e.g. source of wealth if individual donor, company turnover, number of employees, number of years trading, awards, accreditation, links to North East):

People (Board, CEO, senior staff – names, titles):

Shared interests with North East Museums (values, objectives, locality, areas of work):

Links to relevant policies on company website:

Evidence of previous giving / sponsorship:

Areas of potential concern:

If there are concerns complete the attached risk assessment:

Identified Risks (Key risks, threats and uncertainties with accepting this donation / funding)	Controls that could be put in place to manage the risk

Decision (to be completed by appropriate manager dependent on scale of donation):

Up to £1,000 – Communications & Development Manager

£1,000-£50,000 – Head of Finance, Governance & Resources

£50,000 - £500,000 – Director

£500,000+ - North East Museums Strategic Board / TWAM Development Trust

Proceed	
Do not proceed	

Name and job title of Manager:

Signature:

Source checklist for officer completing due diligence checks	Information checked	Yes / No
Charity Commission (or other relevant organisation for non-UK donors)	Legal status of charity (e.g. trust or foundation), latest accounts filed	
Companies House (or other relevant organisation for non-UK donors)	Disqualified directors	
Other sources	Press mentions, social media etc	