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# Conflict of Interest Policy & Advice on Expenses

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## 1 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 1.1 As a Non Departmental Public Body and Company Limited by Guarantee the UK Commission is required to comply with the Companies Act. As you know this act is complex with many different requirements.
- 1.2 One of these requirements is that the Chair and other Commissioners must declare any relevant and material personal or business interests which may conflict with their responsibilities as Commissioners. In order to ensure that such conflicts are identified at an early stage, and that appropriate action can be taken to resolve them, a Register of Interests is maintained by the UK Commission. This register is available to the public and lists direct and indirect financial interests which members of the public could reasonably think may influence judgement. It also includes non-financial interests of Commissioners which relate closely to the UK Commission's activities, and interests of close family members and persons living in the same household as the Commissioner.
- 1.3 The Register is compiled of individual returns submitted by Commissioners. You are asked to complete the form attached at Annex 1 and return it to the Head of Secretariat Services. It would be helpful if you could advise the Commission of any changes as they occur. To assist you we will also send reminders for information on a 6 monthly basis.
- 1.4 To assist you when filling in the form we have listed below the types of information you may need to consider.
  - Directorships
  - Ownership or part ownership of private companies, businesses or consultancies
  - Any shareholdings in organisations with whom the UK Commission has, or is looking to have contracts with, which are or will be funded from their Programme budget
  - Significant shareholdings in organisations with whom the UK Commission has or is looking to have contracts with, which are or will be funded from their Running Costs budget (i.e. more than 10% of the issued shares of that organisation, or, for small firms where any issues may be more acute, at the member's discretion where below 10% holding)
  - Direct relationships or business dealings with SSCs
  - Any other commercial interest in a decision in which you have any role

NOTE: if you have a query about suppliers/contractors please contact Jane Measures for detailed information.

## 2 CONDUCT WITHIN MEETINGS

- 2.1 Common law requires that members of public bodies should not participate in the discussion of, or make decisions about, matters in which they have a direct financial interest. Where matters in which a Commissioner has a direct financial or organisational interest arise at a Commission or Committee meeting the Commissioner concerned must register their interest in advance of the meeting and leave the room whilst that item is discussed. Should such a matter arise unexpectedly then the Commissioner must immediately declare their interest to the Chair and leave the room at that point. If the interest is not substantial it will be for the Chair to decide the

appropriate course of action.

2.2 Where interest is not of a direct financial nature, Commissioners should consider whether participation in the discussion or decision could be perceived as a potential Conflict of Interest. As a Commissioner you should assess whether you, a close family member, a person living in the same household as you, or a firm, business or organisation with which you are connected are likely to be affected by the decision in question, e.g. a decision to invite tenders for a contract where a firm with which you are connected is significantly better placed than others to win it. If so then you should declare an interest to the Company/Committee Secretary as soon as it becomes apparent. If this situation arises during a meeting you should declare your interest to the Chair as above.

### **3 RECEIPT/GIVING OF HOSPITALITY**

3.1 Gifts should, in general, be refused but gifts and benefits of a trivial or inexpensive nature (such as calendars and other gifts of low monetary value) can be distinguished from more expensive and substantial offers. A similar distinction should be made between working lunches/dinners and more expensive social functions, travel and accommodation.

3.2 Isolated acceptance of meals or tickets to public sporting, cultural or social events which do not have any Business content may be accepted if attendance is justified in the UK Commission's interest but acceptance of frequent, regular or annual invitations, particularly from the same source, would breach the standard of conduct required. If you have any questions or concerns about the appropriateness of gifts or hospitality please contact the Head of Secretariat Services.

3.3 On occasion Commissioners may need to offer hospitality. This should be discussed in advance with the Head of Secretariat Services to agree what can be provided. Members may claim full reimbursement for agreed hospitality except when alternative arrangements are made to directly invoice the UKCES.

### **4 COMMISSIONER EXPENSES**

4.1 Commissioners are entitled to claim reasonable and necessary expenses in relation to their work for the Commission as described below. You are reminded that the UK Commission is required to act responsibly with public money and that its expenditure is open to public scrutiny.

#### **4.2 TRAVEL**

4.2.1 Commissioners should use the most economic or most suitable means of travel.

4.2.2 Commissioners may claim travel expenses as follows:

##### Rail Travel

- First Class/Standard class fare whichever is appropriate to the journey in question.

#### Tube Travel

- Oyster Card fare for the Zones travelled.
- Travelcard or tube ticket

#### Air Travel

- Economy class fare.
- Members may travel in business class in exceptional circumstances e.g. trips abroad to US or Canada if there is a business need for this. Commissioners should obtain agreement for business class travel in advance from the Head of secretariat Services.

#### Car (or Motorcycle)

- 40 pence per mile for the first 10,000 miles in a calendar year.
- Necessary parking costs, including parking at rail and air terminals.
- Congestion charges.
- The UK Commission will not normally refund the cost of a hire car. If a member anticipates that a hire car will be needed this should be discussed and agreement obtained in advance from the Head of Secretariat Services.
- The UK Commission will not meet any other motoring-related costs.

#### Taxi

- Taxi fares can be reimbursed with receipts

### **4.3 ACCOMMODATION**

4.3.1 The UK Commission will normally make all arrangements for necessary overnight accommodation on behalf of Commissioners. This includes the cost of bed, breakfast, lunch and evening meal with non-alcoholic drinks as required.

4.3.2 It will not meet the cost of the following:

- Personal telephone calls, internet charges and newspapers
- Alcohol and mini-bar charges
- Any other sundry items

### **4.4 MEALS**

4.4.1 Members may claim the actual cost of meals (except where these are provided). Claims should not normally exceed Breakfast - £18; Lunch - £25; Dinner £35. The cost of alcoholic drinks will not be reimbursed.

### **4.5 TRAINING**

4.5.1 The Chair's Special Adviser is leading on a development programme for Commissioners. The cost of associated courses and training will be met by the UK Commission.

### **4.6 PAYE AND NI**

4.6.1 For Commissioners who claim an honorarium the UK Commissions' London office is deemed the permanent place of business for members. Consequently expenses claims



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for attendance at the London office will be liable for tax. The Commission will meet the tax liability on your behalf if you wish. If so you will need to complete a HMRC declaration form (available from the Head of Secretariat Services) that will enable the Commission to handle this issue directly with HMRC.

4.6.2 Commissioners who do not claim an honorarium are not subject to the above requirements.

#### **4.7 MAKING CLAIMS**

4.7.1 Claims for reimbursement should be submitted monthly using the UK Commission claims form available from the Head of Secretariat Services (a supply has been included with this note). All claims must be supported by receipts. Payment will be made by BACS transfer to the payment address notified by each member. Commissioners are asked to supply banking details when they submit their first claim.

Claims should be sent to:

Lisa Race  
Deputy Head of Secretariat Services  
UK Commission for Employment and Skills  
3 Callflex Business Park  
Golden Smithies Lane  
Wath-upon-Dearne  
S63 7ER

#### **4.8 COMMENTS AND QUERIES**

4.8.1 Any comments or queries about any of the issues above should be directed to Lisa Race, Deputy Head of Secretariat Services (Tel. 01709 774816 or Email: [lisa.race@ukces.org.uk](mailto:lisa.race@ukces.org.uk)).