

Bar and Club Sponsorship

NUSU and the AU specifically have an on-going problem with bars, clubs and promoters being associated with and sponsoring clubs and societies. Several social secretaries/committee members are entering into sponsorship deals where money paid is dependent on society members attendance at a particular bar or club; this may be as stringent as going every week to a certain bar and spending a certain amount of money at that venue.

This raises several moral questions including whether or not there should be any link between joining a club/society and having to attend and drink at bars and clubs, this culture putting some students off sports or societies altogether. Furthermore, NUSU have had several legal cases to deal with in the last 5 years where the monies from bars and clubs have not been paid, this has left clubs and societies in debt and has taken up an immense amount of management time chasing down payments. It has also recently come to light that payments may have been made last year to individual's bank accounts by bars and not deposited in NUSU accounts (it is not yet known if members of the particular club know about this, but this could constitute fraud and may be a matter for the police).

For these reasons it has been decided by elected representatives to pursue a policy of eliminating sponsorship deals linked to bars and clubs altogether to protect the sports clubs, societies, the integrity of their committees, and the reputation of the NUSU. The University have been supportive of this policy and are planning to increase sports and society funding (approximately an additional £100,000 for clubs and societies) on the proviso that in the next 2-3 years we cease all bar, club and promoter sponsorship.

This will not be introduced as a forced decision, but it is intended that over the next 2-3 years we phase out this type of sponsorship. As an incentive, societies will no longer be eligible for any NUSU grants if they take on sponsorship from bars or clubs; **increases in grants will more than make up for the difference.** A sponsorship grant is available for clubs that do not take bar and club sponsorship.

If you as a club/society were to take a grant and then subsequently take this type of sponsorship this could constitute fraud and disciplinary action may be taken against the committee member involved. If you do continue sponsorship deals remember that any written contract you have (this also applies to non-bar/club deals) should be signed off by the Activities officer. This means we can collect the money on your behalf and monies will be invoiced correctly. This year many sponsorship deals are not formalised in a written contract, which means we are finding it very hard to collect money on your behalf. Additionally, if you are not declaring this money into your accounts then this may also constitute fraud and disciplinary action could be taken as this money is not being accounted for correctly on behalf of your members.

Committee officers can act on behalf of clubs and societies but this must be done within the guidelines to protect yourself and the other members of your club or society. You are not only representing your club or society you are also representing NUSU the charity, this is why your contract has to have the authority and support from the Officer concerned. **If you work outside the guidelines you may be personally liable for any losses yourself.**

The new policy is not here to stop you from going to bars and clubs, however we would like to reduce the dependency on funding from these sources and we have an opportunity this year to make that happen. The policy is there to protect club and society officers, funding, and members.

In addition committee members also need to be aware of the bribery act, and the consequences of the changes made in the last 2 years. In essence there is now a corporate responsibility for ensuring that any gifts or hospitality received is declared and deemed appropriate, otherwise we could be sued as an organisation for not taking appropriate steps to avoid bribery.

The key here is whether decisions taken are in the interest of the club or society or members, and whether an incentive benefits one person whose decision making is then affected. This is a difficult area, therefore we have formulated some guidelines which committee members should be aware of and follow. If anyone has any questions or doubts they should be addressed to the Activities Officer or AU Officer in the first instance.

Any hospitality received by committee members on behalf of their club or society above a value of £25 should be declared and recorded in the Activities Centre Hospitality Register by the receiver within 7 days of receipt. Any gift or hospitality that is cash, or direct monies, must be declared whatever the amount. This means if you as a Club or Society Officer personally receive cash or money into your bank account it must be recorded no matter what the amount.

In simple terms a Club or Society officer can personally accept for example up to £25 worth of drinks on behalf of their clubs or society. However, you must ensure that no contract is entered into – i.e. the gift or hospitality cannot be seen to be conditional. Another example is that of accepting a free ski place, if you are a trip organiser. This practice is not unusual and is ok if it is declared who benefits; if the members recognise that this is still the best deal for the members of the club or society then that is fine.

Importantly, this system is designed to be transparent to members so we know they are happy with how clubs and societies are being run.

All Club and Society Officers must agree to abide and understand these rules during the online handover process before any grants may be awarded.