

# ETHICAL SPONSORSHIP STATEMENT AND POLICY

## STATEMENT

Board members are asked to agree on an approach to sponsorship where ethical issues need to be considered.

## Background

Over the years we have had sponsorship from commercial bodies for various projects such as School Games. And, of course, we are actively promoting and welcoming opportunities for sponsorship in the future to further our charitable objectives.

To date the sponsorship arrangements have been with companies that have caused little concern over ethical issues.

The Charity Commission (July 2002) has stated:

- 1 "Charities should consider establishing an ethical policy which clearly sets out the charity's values. This will form part of their wider fund-raising strategy and they can use it to ensure that trustees, staff and any potential commercial partners share a common understanding of the charity's ethical values.
- 2 As best practice, charities should highlight their ethical policies and any commercial partnerships they have in their Annual Report and yearly accounts.
- 3 Against the framework of their ethical policy, charities need to carefully consider whether a proposed commercial partnership is appropriate and in the best interests of the charity."
- 4 Aside from tobacco companies (which is illegal anyway) it's not easy to draw a red line on the type of companies we won't deal with. Those where we need to be wary of include:
  - Where the company's product is counter to the health messages we are portraying, for example alcohol, sugary drinks, confectionary, gambling or
  - The company has a poor ethical reputation, for example, there has been recent discussions with Sports Direct at a national level which has caused concern around workers rights.

*That is not to say we shouldn't deal with these companies, we just need to be cautious about whether the sponsorship is appropriate for the audience and the activity.*



- 5 Officers have asked around various organisations in the sector, including Sport and Recreation Alliance, to see if there are any policies we can use as a starting point for creating our own. The only one we came across was the Active Humber as this policy is based on that which goes some way to setting out a framework for decision making. In addition, Sport England has set out some guiding principles specifically related to sponsorship from high fat, salt and sugar products (Appendix 1).
- The Ethical Consumer Research Association has also produced a useful template relating to Ethical Sponsorship.
  - Using these resources, a draft policy in Appendix 2 sets out a suggested approach to considering commercial sponsors.

## Recommendation

Members make comment and approve the Active Humber ethical sponsorship policy.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Sport England Sponsorship Toolkit; Additional information**

#### **Sponsorship from high fat salt and sugar products (HFSS)**

Many sports bodies (and others) enter into commercial partnerships and sponsorship arrangements with a range of companies offering goods and services in return for investment that allows them to grow their organisation including making available opportunities for more people to play and participate in sport and physical activity.

This is an essential source of income into sport especially at a time when funding from central and local government sources is under pressure.

One of the sectors that sometimes sponsor sports bodies are those which predominantly sell and market food and drink which is high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS). The organisation with whom a partnership is being considered will be able to advise if products meet the criteria as defined in the Nutrient Profile Model.<sup>1</sup> The Committee on Advertising Practice 2017 rules also define HFSS brands as those which contain more than 50% HFSS products in their portfolio.

The recent Government Sport strategy considered this issue and referred to several sports, and individual clubs, which have adopted a responsible approach in this area. The strategy also suggested further work could be undertaken to explore the scope for voluntary agreement. When entering relationships which relate to HFSS products, organisations are encouraged to consider the following principles:

1. Ensure that the monies received are reinvested into developing and promoting their sport including toward providing opportunities for more people to take part in sport and physical activity
2. Provide advice and education, especially to children and young people, around the importance of having a balanced and healthy diet
3. Work with the sponsoring partner to ensure that careful thought is given to promotional activity that is aimed at a high number of children and young people, and the associated messaging that accompanies this activity
4. Where the sports body has responsibility for staging events, bring to the attention of those who provide catering facilities (often outsourced) the importance of considering a food and drink menu that provides information to consumers on the food content and offers a reasonable choice including healthy food and drink types, for example by drawing their attention to the Government Buying Standards for Food.<sup>2</sup>
5. Consider promoting healthy eating messages in other activity the sport undertakes including across its media platforms
6. Where applicable, work with the sponsoring body on giving greater promotional emphasis to its products that form part of a healthy and balanced diet
7. Disseminate information and advice across their sporting sector including to individual athletes who take sponsorships, and to those sports bodies which are based overseas but undertake activity in the UK.

## Appendix 2

# ETHICAL SPONSORSHIP POLICY

## 1. PURPOSE OF POLICY

To enable Board Members and Officers to take ethical considerations into account when deciding upon receiving sponsorship from outside bodies.

## 2. COMMITMENT TO ADDRESS ETHICAL ISSUES

We actively seek opportunities to work together with external organisations to achieve shared objectives. However, it is vital that we maintain our independence and do not allow external partnerships to bring the name of Active Humber into disrepute.

Active Humber therefore seeks, so far as is practical and within the constraints of UK law;

- initiatives that do not compromise the independent status of Active Humber
- to ensure that the activities of organisations we work with are consistent with our organisational values

This policy has been devised to ensure clarity and openness to all our stakeholders. It is designed to address sponsorship and cause related marketing. We welcome comments, criticism and suggestions as to how these goals can be met.

## 3. PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 All sponsorship agreements must be open, transparent and able to withstand the highest degree of scrutiny, to protect the integrity of the organisation.
- 3.2 Active Humber will not enter into any agreement or partnership, which might threaten its strong reputation.
- 3.3 Active Humber may enter into partnerships which are directly supportive of its Vision and Ambition.
- 3.4 Active Humber should only accept commercial sponsorship where we retain control over the programmes and intellectual property of the project in question. Active Humber should retain editorial control of any published material.
- 3.5 Active Humber name and logo(s) may be used by external sponsors only with the permission of the Active Humber lead officer for the purposes requested.

## 4. AVOIDANCE CRITERIA

Partnerships with companies involved in any of the following activities will be avoided:

- tobacco manufacture

- nuclear weapons systems manufacture
- companies generating more than 10% of revenue from the sale of pornography

Active Humber will exercise caution in entering into partnerships where:

- the company's product is counter to a healthy lifestyle alcohol, sugary drinks, confectionary, and gambling, or
- the company has a poor ethical reputation.

The following will be used as a basis for decision making and may be added to from time to time:

- the nature and type of activity that is being sponsored
  - the age and profile of the intended recipients
  - the views of partners
  - the extent of risk to reputational damage
  - the benefits the sponsorship can bring to further Active Humber's objectives
- the
- nature of the associated branding

## **5. PROCESS**

- 5.1 All offers of sponsorship will be considered on a case by case basis considering the avoidance criteria.
- 5.2 All offers of sponsorship support from commercial organisations will be approved by the CEO
- and two Board members. Any offers more than £30,000 will be approved by the full Board in
- accordance with financial protocols.
- 5.3 All sponsorship arrangements must have formal agreements in place between Active Humber
- and the Sponsor before any funds are received.

## **6. TRANSPARENCY**

- 6.1 A copy of this policy will be displayed on Active Humber's website
- 6.2 A full list of corporate sponsors giving over £5,000 will be maintained on our website.