



Museum of Music History

MOMH-POL003 - Ethics Policy

1. Public engagement & public benefit

Museums and those who work in and with them should:

- 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

All those who work in and with MOMH will:

- 1.1 Provide public access to, and meaningful engagement with, museums, collections, and information about collections without discrimination.
- 1.2 Ensure editorial integrity in programming and interpretation. Resist attempts to influence interpretation or content by particular interest groups, including lenders, donors and funders.
- 1.3 Support free speech and freedom of expression. Respect the right of all to express different views within MOMH unless illegal to do so or inconsistent with the purpose of MOMH as an inclusive public space.
- 1.4 Ensure that information and research presented or generated by MOMH is accurate.
- 1.5 Take steps to minimise or balance bias in research undertaken by MOMH.
- 1.6 Acknowledge publicly that MOMH benefits from all those who have contributed to the making, meaning and presence in MOMH of its collections.
- 1.7 Work in partnership with communities, audiences, potential audiences and supporters of MOMH.
- 1.8 Ensure that everyone has the opportunity for meaningful participation in the work of MOMH.

2. Stewardship of collections

Museums and those who work in and with them should:

- maintain and develop collections for current and future generations
- acquire, care for, exhibit and loan collections with transparency and competency to generate knowledge and engage the public with collections
- treat museum collections as cultural, scientific or historic assets, not financial assets

All those who work in and with MOMH should:

2.1 Preserve collections as a tangible link between the past, present and future. Balance MOMH's role in safeguarding items for the benefit of future audiences with its obligation to optimise access for present audiences.

2.2 Collect according to detailed, published and regularly reviewed policies that state clearly what, how and why MOMH collects.

2.3 Accept or acquire an item only if MOMH can provide adequate, continuing long-term care for the item and public access to it, without compromising standards of care and access relating to the existing collections.

2.4 Conduct due diligence to verify the ownership of any item prior to purchase or loan, and that the current holder is legitimately able to transfer title or to lend. Apply the same strict criteria to gifts and bequests.

2.5 Reject any item for purchase, loan or donation if there is any suspicion that it was wrongfully taken during a time of conflict, stolen, illicitly exported or illicitly traded, unless explicitly allowed by treaties or other agreements, or where MOMH is co-operating with attempts to establish the identity of the rightful owner(s) of an item.

2.6 Discuss expectations and clarify in writing the precise terms on which all parties are accepting transfer of title. Exercise sensitivity towards donors when accepting or declining gifts and bequests.

2.7 Deal sensitively and promptly with requests for repatriation both within the UK and from abroad.

2.8 Acknowledge that responsible disposal takes place as part of a museum's long-term collections development policy and starts with a curatorial review. Ensure transparency and carry out any disposal openly, according to unambiguous, generally accepted procedures.

2.9 Recognise the principle that collections should not normally be regarded as financially negotiable assets and that financially motivated disposal risks damaging public confidence in museums. Refuse to undertake disposal principally for financial reasons, except where it will significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection. This will include demonstrating that:

- A the item under consideration lies outside MOMH's established core collection
- B extensive prior consultation with sector bodies and the public has been undertaken and considered
- C it is not to generate short-term revenue (for example to meet a budget deficit)
- D it is as a last resort after other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored.

2.10 Refuse to mortgage collections or offer them as security for a loan. Ensure the financial viability of MOMH is not dependent on any monetary valuation placed on items in its collections.

2.11 Resist placing a commercial value on the collections unless there is a compelling reason to do so, and for collections management purposes only.

3. Individual & institutional integrity

Museums and those who work in and with them should:

- act in the public interest in all areas of work
- always uphold the highest level of institutional integrity and personal conduct
- build respectful and transparent relationships with partner organisations, governing bodies, staff and volunteers to ensure public trust in MOMH's activities

All those who work in and with MOMH will:

- 3.1 Avoid any private activity or pursuit of a personal interest that may conflict or be perceived to conflict with the public interest. Consider the effect of activities conducted in private life on the reputation of MOMH and of museums generally.
- 3.2 Avoid behaviour that could be construed as asserting personal ownership of collections.
- 3.3 Avoid all private activities that could be construed as trading or dealing in cultural property unless authorised in advance by the governing body.
- 3.4 Refuse to place a value on items belonging to the public.
- 3.5 Make clear when communicating personally or on behalf of another organisation that views expressed do not necessarily represent those of MOMH.

In addition, all those who work in and with MOMH will:

- 3.6 Carefully consider offers of financial support from commercial organisations and other sources in the UK and internationally and seek support from organisations whose ethical values are consistent with those of MOMH.
- 3.7 Exercise due diligence in understanding the ethical standards of commercial partners with a view to maintaining public trust and integrity in all museum activities.
- 3.7 Abide by a fair, consistent and transparent policy for all those working in MOMH, including those in unpaid positions.
- 3.8 Be sensitive to the impact of MOMH and its visitors on natural and human environments.
- 3.9 Make best use of resources, use energy and materials responsibly and minimise waste.

For review by the Trustees of MOMH by 31/01/2028