

D 657/BN

FROM: D Chesterton

PEFO

10 December 1991

RC Managers

Heads of Division

HODs:

Mr Cooke

Mr D J R Hill

Mr D A Hill

Mr Leach

Director, ARU

OFFICIAL ENTERTAINMENT IN NIO

The attached Memorandum of Guidance on Official Entertainment by NIO officials throughout the Department supersedes the separate guidance issued to NICS in 1984 and HCS in 1987.

The prime responsibility for authorising hospitality to be paid out of public funds rests with the authorising officers, who may wish to consult myself or the respective Establishment Officers either in cases of doubt or to put a case where they believe that exceptional treatment may be warranted. The Memorandum does not seek to prescribe precisely all the criteria but it does reinforce the basic principles laid down for the Civil Services.

Whilst maintaining the accepted practice in the public service that public money is not generally used for the entertainment of public servants, the Memorandum acknowledges the relationships between NIO and other public agencies in the Province that may make a degree of entertainment desirable in furthering the interests of the Department.

I should be grateful if you would ensure that the guidance is drawn to the attention of all your staff who may be involved in organising hospitality. Could you also keep new members of staff similarly informed. There should be no excuse for anybody to claim ignorance of the rules in force.

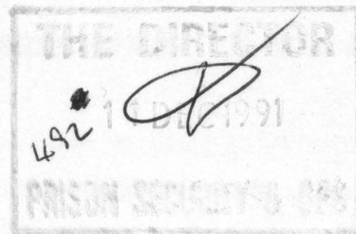
(signed)

D CHESTERTON

(SH x2275, OAB x6574)

Ops
PApl.
H.

Mr. H. Gonsale



cc: PS/PUS (L&B)
PS/Mr Fell
Mr Ledlie
Mr Thomas
DPP
Crown Solicitor

Mr. B. Bell
Mr. H. H. H. H.

P/A OD 57/87/1

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MANAGERS:

Mr Wood
Mr Alston
Mr Wilson
Mr Steele
Mr Lyon
Mr Shannon
Mr Junkin

HoDs:

Mr Cooke
Mr D J R Hill
Mr D A Hill
Mr Leach
Director, ARU
Mr Pawson (L&B)
Miss Johnston
Mr Cornick
Mr Masefield
Mr Daniell
Director, NIWO
Mr Dodds
Mr Maccabe
Mr McClelland
Mr McNeill
Miss Mills
Mr McMullan
Mr Ginn
Mr Hall, NIFSL
Mr Laverty

Authority to Incur Expenditure

4. The Permanent Under Secretary (PUS), as Accounting Officer, has delegated responsibility for authorising expenditure on official entertainment to the Principal Establishment and Finance Officer, who is advised by the Establishment Officers in London and Belfast. The PEFO remains answerable to PUS, who is of course accountable to Parliament for all departmental expenditure, on the issue of whether public funds may properly be used for any particular hospitality or function. The PEFO has authorised the Grade 2s (Deputy Under Secretaries), Grade 3s (Under Secretaries) in both London and Belfast and the Grade 4 (Director of NI Information Services) to approve and incur, as appropriate, expenditure on official entertainment. They in turn may authorise official entertainment recommended by their Heads of Division, normally Grade 5 (Assistant

MEMORANDUM OF GUIDANCE ON OFFICIAL ENTERTAINMENT IN THE NIO

1. It is now some years since the last memorandum was issued for the guidance of NIO officials when considering whether to offer hospitality at public expense. This Memorandum covers NIO staff members of both the Northern Ireland Civil Service and the Home Civil Service.

Justification for entertainment at public expense

2. A necessary pre-condition for any entertainment or hospitality to be financed from Departmental funds is that it will be in the direct interests of the Northern Ireland Office. While one cannot always guarantee that the benefit will be achieved, that must be both the intention and the reasonable expectation.

3. In principle, hospitality cannot be provided at public expense, when it is offered merely as a return of hospitality. Nor should civil servants be recipients of hospitality at public expense, except when their presence is required to entertain and look after outsiders, or in the circumstances described in paragraph 6.

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Secretary). Except where officials have their own separate budgets for hospitality, on every occasion that it is proposed to use public funds for the purposes of entertainment, prior authority must first be obtained from the appropriate Authorising Officer at Grade 4 level or above. If Authorising Officers are in any doubt about the application of this guidance, they should seek advice from the PEFO or the appropriate Establishment Officer. They should also do so where the cost will fall to one of the budgets managed by the Establishment Officers and will exceed £150. The Director of Public Prosecutions and the Crown Solicitor are also authorised to approve and incur expenditure on official entertainment.

Main Criteria for Official Entertainment

5. In considering requests for official entertainment of people outside the public service, the Authorising Officers will bear in mind the following considerations:

(a) the function must be in the direct - though not necessarily immediate - interests of the NIO;

(b) the level of hospitality proposed must be modest and a broad outline of cost and numbers attending must be provided on all occasions before authorisation;

(c) hospitality must not be offered solely to reciprocate earlier entertainment by the other party;

(d) where Civil Servants participate in the entertainment as hosts, their numbers should be kept to the minimum necessary. Normally the outside (non-Civil Service) guests should outnumber the hosts, though occasionally equal numbers of officials and guests may be appropriate. Where exceptionally it is proposed that the number of officials present (including members of the RUC and UK Armed Services and other public servants) should exceed the number of outsiders, prior approval must be obtained from the PEFO or appropriate Establishment Officer, (though see paragraph 11).

Management Entertainment

6. Strictly limited entertainment for fellow civil servants at public expense is allowed, on special occasions and for special purposes, under the heading "Management Entertainment". Prior approval must be sought from the appropriate Establishment Officer for any expenditure of this nature. Approval will only be given when it is regarded as conducive to good management. Examples might be a working lunch to carry forward departmental business either internally or with representatives of other Government Departments, outside bodies and agencies and overseas visitors and guests, or the provision of refreshments to enable a Minister or senior official to meet junior staff informally in the interests of better communication. "Management Entertainment" must always be used sparingly and at modest cost, using Civil Service facilities whenever possible. If spouses are to be invited to any entertainment, prior approval from an Authorising Officer must always be sought.

Farewell Parties

7. Farewell parties for civil or other public servants may not be funded from public funds and all such occasions should be treated as private ventures. This remains the position whether or not a proportion of the guests are "outsiders".

Subsistence

8. Officers who may be entitled to Subsistence Allowance but who receive a meal or meals at public expense must reduce their claims by the 5 hour subsistence rate in respect of each meal received at public expense.

Ministerial Hospitality

9. The NIO will provide for Ministerial Hospitality only where the function is in the direct, though not necessarily immediate, interests of the Northern Ireland Office. There will be occasions when entertainment provided by Ministers is less for the benefit of

the NIO than for another Northern Ireland Department for which the Minister is responsible. Where the case is clear cut, for example a dinner party held at a Northern Ireland Department's suggestion in Stormont House or Hillsborough Castle, the NIO must always be reimbursed by that sponsoring Department. Where two Departments have an interest, the costs may be shared proportionally.

10. In addition, there may be occasions when the Secretary of State incurs expenditure on hospitality which assists him to perform his duties as a senior member of the Cabinet but has less direct benefit to the NIO. Such expenditure could normally be met from the London Establishment Division (including PAGAB) fund, where it would not otherwise fall naturally to the Government Hospitality Fund.

If the estimated cost exceeds that in the previous year, prior Established precedents appropriate Establishment Officer must be sought.

11. It is recognised that there are infrequent but recurrent occasions, where it has been established that the criteria are deemed to have been satisfied. If the cost can be contained within 10% of that authorised by the respective Establishment Officer(s) for the previous year, the following functions may be arranged without a requirement for further approval:

(a) The Controller of the NI Prison Service may offer modest hospitality to a small number of representatives of the Northern Ireland Prison Service, when he considers this necessary in the interests of the Department; similarly he may authorise Directors of Prisons Divisions to offer such hospitality;

Conferences and Courses

(b) The annual receptions held by the State Pathologist and the Northern Ireland Forensic Science Laboratory for their non-civil service contacts; or dinner, including drinks, at the Department's expense. An official who is attending in a

(c) SIL and ESL annual receptions for outside non-civil service contacts at a time when there are ceremonial functions in Horseguards;

Special Cases

- (d) The annual reception organised by CPL under the British-Irish Association auspices; 14. It is in the NIO which may not always fall clearly within these guidelines. Two specific examples:
- (e) The annual reception provided by Establishment Division (L) Services for those who provide a service in the fields of travel and either of security; 15. budgets held by the two Establishment Officers or to the NI Departments, depending upon the nature of the function;
- and (f) SPOB for entertainment of contacts mainly in the security forces; 16. All other requests for exceptions to be made should be directed to the appropriate Establishment Officer, who will
- (g) The annual plenary sessions of the Departmental Whitley.

If the estimated cost exceeds that in the previous year, prior approval from the appropriate Establishment Officer must be sought.

15. Claims for reimbursement of expenditure on official

12. In addition coffee/tea and scones/biscuits may be provided at official expense for: using as appropriate forms H&I or NIO 59 (R).

Claims by Grade 5s (Assistant Secretary) and below should be

- (a) those at meetings where there are more than 3 persons attached present who do not work under the control of the chairman, the name and the persons entertained (when security permits). All claims must be made as promptly as possible.

- (b) members of a promotion board;

Use of Stormont House or Hillsborough Castle

Also, if a promotion board should extend over a half-day, sandwiches or salads and tea/coffee may be provided for Board members at Departmental expense. 17. Ireland Departments or other bodies in either of those locations should be put first to the Head of PAGAB, on Belfast

Conferences and Courses

13. Invited speakers and distinguished guests at conferences and courses may be invited to lunch and/or dinner, including drinks, at the Department's expense. 14. An official who is attending in a capacity other than as organiser or host will not normally be reimbursed for any hospitality which he or she offers at such a function.

17. Annex 1 sets out procedures - 5 - the use of Ministerial drinks cabinets in London and Belfast (some copy recipients only).

Special Cases

14. It is recognised that there are activities in the NIO which may not always fall clearly within these guidelines. Two specific examples are: (a) certain functions organised by NI Information Services where the expenditure may fall, with prior agreement, to either of the central budgets held by the two Establishment Officers or to the NI Departments, depending upon the nature of the function; and (b) the Inter Government Secretariat which has a separate hospitality budget. All other requests for exceptions to be made should be directed to the appropriate Establishment Officer, who will seek the advice of the PEFO, where appropriate.

Reimbursement

15. Claims for reimbursement of expenditure on official entertainment should be submitted to the respective Establishment Division (or PAGAB) using as appropriate forms HE1 or NIO 59 (R). Claims by Grade 5s (Assistant Secretary) and below should be counter-signed by the Authorising Officer. Receipted bills must be attached and the claim should state the nature of the function and the names of the persons entertained (when security permits). All claims must be made as promptly as possible.

Use of Stormont House or Hillsborough Castle

16. All requests for official functions, whether sponsored by the NIO or the Northern Ireland Departments or other bodies in either of those locations should be put first to the Head of PAGAB, on Belfast 763255, ext 2255. The contact for detailed arrangements when approval has been given to use Stormont House is the accommodation administrator, currently Betty Roome on ext 2244, or, if Hillsborough Castle is the venue, the Administrator, currently Mary Hawthorne, on 0846 682244.

Ministerial Hospitality

17. Annex I sets out procedures for the use of Ministerial drinks cabinets in London and Belfast (some copy recipients only).

Contact Points

ANNEX I

18. Any enquiries regarding this Memorandum should be addressed in the first instance to Olga Charlton, Establishment Division (B) (763255 ext 5329) or Ian Hassall, Establishment Division (L) (GTN 210-6512)

Official drinks cabinets in Ministers' and top officials' London Offices are replenished by Establishment Division (L). Private Secretaries should notify Tina Shikotra in PM Branch in Establishment Division (L) on GTN 210 6516 of their requirements. An order is placed with a wine merchant who presents a monthly bill. This is paid out of the hospitality fund of the Division. For the purposes of estimating and

NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

December 1991 expenditure, the monthly costs are apportioned between Ministers according to the amount ordered for each. The drinks supplied at public expense are of course intended only for official entertainment.

Ministers may find it convenient for supplies for private use to be ordered along with those for official entertainment. Tina Shikotra will advise each private Secretary monthly what has been the cost of drink supplied to the Minister's drinks cabinet and will ascertain how much is to be regarded as incurred for private use.

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The Private Secretary will obtain a cheque from the Minister (made out to the NIO) for the amount due for private use, with the balance paid from Departmental funds.

The procedure with respect to official drinks cabinets in Ministerial offices in Belfast will be similar. Requirements are to be notified to the accommodation administrator, Ext 2244, who issues supplies from Stormont House. Equivalent arrangements will be made -7- enable Ministers to pay for any drink used for private purposes, cheques again being made to the NIO.

The Use of Official Drinks Cabinets

(a) London

Official drinks cabinets In Ministers' and top officials' London Offices are replenished by Establishment Division (L). Private Secretaries should notify Tina Shikotra in PM Branch in Establishment Division (L) on GTN 210 6516 of their requirements. An order is placed with a wine merchant who presents a monthly bill. This is paid out of the hospitality fund of the Division. For the purposes of estimating and monitoring expenditure, the monthly costs are apportioned between Ministers according to the amount ordered for each. The drinks supplied at public expense are of course intended only for official entertainment.

Ministers may find it convenient for supplies for private use to be ordered along with those for official entertainment. Tina Shikotra will advise each private Secretary monthly what has been the cost of drink supplied to the Minister's drinks cabinet and will ascertain how much is to be regarded as incurred for private use.

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The procedure with respect to official drinks cabinets in Ministerial offices in Belfast will be similar. Requirements are to be notified to the accommodation administrator, Ext 2244, who issues supplies from Stormont House. Equivalent arrangements will be made to enable Ministers to pay for any drink used for private purposes, cheques again being made to the NIO.

There will, of course, be no objection to Ministers or Private Secretaries making their own arrangements for personal use of private entertainment rather than drawing supplies through the office, if they prefer to do so.

(b) Stormont House and Hillsborough Castle

The domestic cabinet for the use of Ministers and officials in the lounge at Stormont House is an exception to the rule that the contents supplied at public expense are only for official entertainment. Accommodation and meals are provided at Stormont House for the security and convenience of Ministers, their Private Secretaries, and senior officials.

The same principle applies to the drinks supplied in the Secretary of State's flat and in the self-catering accommodation at Hillsborough Castle for use during Minister's periods of duty in the Province. Drinks for private entertainment can again be supplied if needed. Requests should be made to the office manager at Hillsborough Castle and cheques made payable to the NIO.

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