

Gifts and hospitality policy

Why do we need this policy?

This policy aims to provide guidance to all individuals when receiving, accepting and/or providing gifts and hospitality.

Who needs to follow this policy and why?

This policy applies to all of the following:

- board members
- employees
- partners

What's our policy and how will we implement it?

- You must declare all offers of gifts and hospitality, made to or by you, regardless of value.
- Any offers or acceptance of gifts and hospitality must be reported to the corporate governance manager.
- All offers of gifts and hospitality must be recorded in the gifts and hospitality register.
- Offers must be declared whether they are accepted or declined.

Receiving gifts

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are not placed in a position that compromises your role or our organisation's statutory obligations or appears to do so.

Seasonal or modest gifts may be accepted. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- diaries
- pens
- calendars

Gifts through which a member of staff might personally or financially benefit must not be accepted. For example, trade or discount cards. Gifts of alcohol should not be accepted under any circumstances.

Gifts should be refused or returned with a carefully worded covering letter, especially where a contractor relationship is involved.

Where the refusal or return of a gift is likely to offend or embarrass the donor discretion

may be exercised as to the handling and retention of the gift. This is dependent on all of the following:

- value of the gift
- nature of the gift
- origin of the gift

In these circumstances, guidance on whether to retain the gift should be sought from the corporate governance manager.

A distinction should be made between items offered as gifts and those offered in place of fees for speeches, lectures, or other work done in an official capacity. Offers of this kind may be accepted providing the item is of a trivial nature or value but should still be reported.

Receiving hospitality

In determining whether it is proper to accept hospitality offered, all of the following should be considered:

Nature of the hospitality:

Approval is generally not required for a working lunch which is regarded as acceptable practice.

A more formal lunch or dinner should be approved by a member of the executive leadership team, chief executive and/or chair prior to attendance.

Representation:

Care should be taken to ensure that the organisation is not over-represented when invited to formal events where hospitality is accepted.

Risk of expectation of reciprocal hospitality or business

Care should be taken not to accept or offer hospitality that will create an expectation of the same in return, or an expectation that other business benefits may be offered such as a favourable regulatory decision or the awarding of a contract.

Where refusal of hospitality may cause embarrassment or appear discourteous, guidance should be sought from the corporate governance manager prior to acceptance/refusal.

Further guidelines for offers of hospitality

Offers of hospitality should only be accepted where there is a clear link to working arrangements and a business reason can be demonstrated. For example (any of the following):

- attendance at a conference which provides complimentary subsistence, travel

and accommodation (this does not need to be declared on the register unless a gift is received)

- attending a free training course
- attending a drinks reception to network with key partners or stakeholders

The receipt of modest working lunches and dinners are acceptable where there is a business reason. For example, maintaining good relationships with existing and future stakeholders. Care should be taken when accepting hospitality from potential future contractors. In particular, it is not advisable to accept gifts/hospitality at any point in the time surrounding a tendering process or a contract renewal as this has the potential to be construed as a bribe. In these circumstances, guidance should be sought from the commercial team.

Invitations to events which are purely social events should be considered carefully before accepting as it may be difficult to substantiate a genuine business reason. You should seek guidance from a member of the executive leadership team, chief executive or chair prior to accepting.

The following guidance outlines what action should be taken when seeking approval for the acceptance of gifts and hospitality.

Hospitality	Prior Approval?	Further Action?
Modest conventional hospitality (working lunch)	No	None
Formal lunch/dinner by prior invitation	Prior approval required from an executive director, chief executive and/or chair. Consult commercial team if offered during a tender process.	Record in gifts and hospitality register
Commemorative event, for example, those organised by a contractor, consultant or supplier to celebrate a hand over, or opening	Prior approval required if it takes the form of a formal lunch or dinner by prior invitation; otherwise, no approval required	Record in gifts and hospitality register
Annual dinner of a professional institute where the officer is a guest of the institute or association	No	Record in gifts and hospitality register
Cultural or sporting event as a guest	Prior approval required from an executive director,	Record in gifts and hospitality register



Hospitality	Prior Approval?	Further Action?
	chief executive and/or chair. Consult commercial team if offered during a tender process.	

Gifts and hospitality register

The corporate governance manager shall keep a register of gifts and hospitality. This will cover all invitations and offers of gifts and hospitality extended to staff, board members and partners, whether they are accepted or declined.

The register shall be available for periodic inspection by internal audit and will be made available at year end for review by external audit.

Offers of gifts and hospitality involving the board and executive directors may be published within the annual report and/or on our website.

All individuals should maintain a personal record of gifts and hospitality.

Gifts/ hospitality record form

A gifts/hospitality [record form](#) should be completed by all recipients and providers of gifts and hospitality. This is to ensure information is recorded in a consistent manner.

Completed and approved forms should be sent to the corporate governance manager who will update the register accordingly and file the forms appropriately. All such forms will be made available for review by internal and external audit.

Reporting, monitoring and reviewing

In order to provide the necessary level of assurance for audit and compliance purposes, the gifts and hospitality register must be regularly monitored, reviewed and reported.

All gifts, prizes and donations made by Social Work England staff must be reported in writing on an annual basis. This will be commissioned by the finance team.

Providing gifts and hospitality

The expenditure of public money on official gifts and hospitality should be done with modesty. Frivolity and excess can provide just cause for a negative public reaction.



Providing gifts

Any gifts provided by Social Work England must be in line with guidance in [Managing Public Money](#).

Gifts and vouchers to staff are generally inappropriate unless as part of our recognised non-pay reward scheme, Applause.

Providing hospitality

Hospitality (both internal and external) can be described as any generous or material reception that is more than incidental. Detailed guidance in regard to hospitality and expenditure limits is contained within our [travel, subsistence and expenses policy](#).

Key things you need to know:

- When considering a gift, you must speak to the [finance team](#) first to ensure you have the appropriate authority and budget. The finance team will also decide whether the gift is acceptable/appropriate.
- Before giving or offering a gift(s) or hospitality, prior approval must be obtained as outlined within this policy and the [travel, subsistence and expenses policy](#).
- Make sure any decisions you make, and any approval given, are fully documented.
- Your actions must bear both public and internal scrutiny. Breaches of policy or unethical behaviour may result in disciplinary action.

Expenditure on official gifts

You must attain approval from HM Treasury and/or Parliament before providing money or purchasing property that you intend to give as a gift.

Purchase of Alcohol

It is government policy that public funds **should not be used** for the purchase of alcohol.

If this policy isn't followed, the most appropriate course of action will be agreed between the policy owner and the head of people and development, dependent on the circumstances.

Roles and responsibilities

Accounting officer

The accounting officer's responsibilities in regard to this document cover the following areas:

Regularity and Propriety

- Ensuring all transactions are accurately identified and recorded

- Ensuring that all requested funds are used for the purpose intended

Value for Money

- Ensuring that the organisation's procurement, projects and processes are regularly evaluated and reviewed. This is so that we can ensure confidence with regard to suitability, effectiveness and value.

Management of opportunity and risk

- Achieving the right balance commensurate with the organisation's business and risk appetite.

Corporate governance manager

- Ensure the gifts and hospitality register is accurate and complete at all times
- Ensure all details contained within record forms are accurately transferred to the register.
- Ensure all forms are securely stored and available for inspection
- Provide a quarterly report of all gifts and hospitality to the head of finance and the executive director of people and business support for review
- Provide an annual summary of the register for inclusion in the annual report and website
- Provide, upon request, all details/records relating to the receipt and offer of gifts and hospitality for internal and external audit

All board members, employees and partners

- All individuals must be familiar with and apply this policy.

Queries?

If you have a query about this policy, please contact the corporate governance manager.

Definitions

Gift

A gift is any item, cash, goods or service which is offered for personal benefit of the recipient at no cost or at a cost that is less than the commercial value. It includes all transactions economically equivalent to free.

Hospitality

Hospitality can be defined as any generous or material reception that is more than an incidental kind, such as a light refreshment or beverage.

NDPB

Non-Departmental Public Body

Propriety

The requirement that expenditure and receipts should be dealt with in accordance with Parliament's intentions and the principles of Parliamentary control, this includes the conventions agreed with Parliament (and in particular the *Public Accounts Committee*).

Regularity

The requirement for all items of expenditure and receipts to be dealt with in accordance with the legislation authorising them, any applicable delegated authority and the rules of Government Accounting.

Supply estimates

Supply Estimates are the means by which a department seeks authority from Parliament for its own spending each year, including spending by its NDPBs.

Related policies, procedures and information sources

- [Travel, subsistence and expenses policy](#)
- [Anti-fraud policy](#)
- [Fraud response procedure](#)
- [Government procurement card policy](#)
- [Disciplinary policy](#)
- [Employee code of conduct](#)
- [Board code of conduct](#)

Policy information

- **Last reviewed:** February 2026
- **Next review date:** February 2027
- **Board sign off:** March 2026
- **Policy owner:** Executive Director – People and Business Support