

Summary:

- *This policy is to provide guidance to staff to ensure that their conduct meets public expectations and relates to the receipt of gifts and hospitality by staff from members of the public, partners and or contractors.*
- *It provides guidance to staff on gifts and hospitality that may be accepted and those that may not along with information on where to register the offer and the authorisation process.*

ID	
Last Review Date	<i>September 2014</i>
Next Review Date	<i>September 2015</i>
Approval	<i>Governance & Audit & Standards Committee</i>
Policy Owner	<i>City Solicitor & Strategic Director</i>
Policy Author	<i>Deputy Chief Internal Auditor</i>
Advice & Guidance	<i>Internal Audit</i>
Location	<i>PolicyHub</i>
Related Documents	<i>Whistleblowing Policy, Formal Action Policy, Code of Conduct, Anti-Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy</i>
Applicability	<i>All members of staff, including temporary employees.</i>

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The public has the right to expect the highest standard of conduct from all Council staff and any departure from this standard would always be regarded as a serious matter.
- 1.2 One area where it is accepted that guidance is required to staff to ensure that their conduct meets public expectation is in relation to the receipt of gifts and hospitality. Employees should not therefore accept gifts, hospitality, bequests or sponsorship in any personal capacity.
- 1.3 It is however understood, that in certain circumstances refusal may cause offence e.g. where the gift is a small token of thanks from appreciative members of the public.

2 Decision to accept a gift or hospitality

- 2.1 You must obtain the consent of your Head of Service before accepting a gift or hospitality.
- 2.2 If you are in any doubt the gift or hospitality must be declined.

3 Gifts which may be accepted

- 3.1 Gifts and sponsorship with a value of less than £25 (or £5 for staff employed in adult social care and housing) may only be accepted if:
 - No ulterior motive is apparent and
 - There is no danger of misinterpretation by the public (for example, the gift comes from someone tendering for work or who is conducting business with the council) and
 - Such gifts have not become a frequent occurrence
- 3.2 This includes small tokens of thanks from appreciative members of the public and promotional items such as pens, diaries, calendars etc., that are routinely sent out by various companies and organisations with which the council does business.
- 3.3 If a gift over the value of £25 is offered it should not be accepted unless refusal would cause offence, in which case the gift must be donated to the Lord Mayor's Appeal raffle, e.g. a gift over £25 in value offered by a member of a visiting town twinning group.

4 Gifts which must not be accepted

- 4.1 The following gifts must not be accepted under any circumstances.
 - Gifts of cash, including voucher, token, postal orders etc.

- Gifts from a person with whom the Council may contract or is in contract negotiations.
- Gifts from any person whose business the Council may regulate e.g. through planning control, licensing and environmental health
- Gifts from a person where you may be required to formulate recommendations to the Council, or you could influence the recommendations of others
- Gifts where you are monitoring the service provided by the person on behalf of the Council.

5 Hospitality

- 5.1 Hospitality cannot be accepted if it is offered to you in your personal capacity. Hospitality may be accepted if it is under £40 in value, you are receiving the hospitality on behalf of the council and you have the prior approval of your Head of Service or Strategic Director or you are receiving meals as part of a Town Twinning event.
- 5.2 In all cases you should consider the impression that the acceptance of the hospitality will make in the minds of the public. In particular:-
- Is the hospitality offered in proportion or might there be a hidden motive?
 - Has it been offered only to you or to others as well?
 - Are they conducting business with the Council?
 - Does or might the person offering it contract with the Council or are they in contract negotiations?
 - Is the hospitality offered by a person whose business the Council may regulate e.g. through planning control, licensing control or environmental health?
 - Is the hospitality from a person where you may be required to formulate recommendations to the Council, or you could influence the recommendations of others?
 - Is the hospitality offered from someone where you are monitoring the service provided by the person on behalf of the Council?

If you have any doubt then you should decline the hospitality.

6 Bequests

- 6.1 You must actively discourage any bequest or donation being made to you and decline any of which you become aware of. If you become aware that such a bequest or donation has been made, or may be made, you must tell the Monitoring Officer as soon as possible.
- 6.2 Wherever possible, the bequest or donation will be declined or returned to the estate of the person who made the bequest. If this is not possible, the bequest or donation will be given to the Lord Mayor's Appeal.

7 Sponsorship

- 7.1 Any offer of sponsorship to a member of staff will be treated in the same manner as a gift and should be declined unless approved by you Head of Service and may in any event only be for charitable purposes.
- 7.2 Where the Council makes a financial contribution to an event of community group, where you, or your relative, may obtain a benefit which is more than that which is generally received by other members of the public, you should declare an interest and consider take no further part in the development of the event.

8 All gifts and hospitality offered must be registered

- 8.1 Whether a gift or hospitality is accepted or declined, and whether it is over or under the allowed limits, it is your personal responsibility to register it, the source of the gift or hospitality and the reason for it. You must do so within seven days of receiving or declining it. For staff registering items, access is via the intranet and search for 'gifts and hospitality register'. The public register is to be found at www.forms.portsmouth.gov.uk/GiftsSearch/GiftsSearch.aspx search 'gifts and hospitality register'. If the gift or hospitality is accepted as part of the registration your Head of Service will be required to confirm that:-
- They approve of the acceptance of the gift or hospitality and
 - That this policy has been complied with.

9 Annual report on compliance and review of the policy

- 9.1 The Monitoring Officer will report annually to the Governance and Audit and Standards Committee on compliance with this policy and make recommendations to the Council arising from its implementation.

See also: -

Whistleblowing Policy

Formal Action Policy

Code of Conduct

Anti-Fraud Bribery & Corruption