

West Midlands Police



PART 1 POLICE ORDERS

Police Headquarters
Lloyd House

FORCE DIRECTIVE

NO. 02/2010

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GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY.

All members of the public and communities we serve, all police officers, special constables and police staff members shall receive equal and fair treatment regardless of, age, disability, gender, transgender, race, religion, belief or sexual orientation. If you consider this policy could be improved for any of these groups please raise with the author of the policy without delay.

Any enquiries in relation to this Order should be directed to Steve Middleditch, Head of Corporate Services on extension 7800 2456.

1. INTRODUCTION.

- 1.1 The provision and acceptance of gifts and hospitality are issues that require careful consideration by all police officers, police staff and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)
- 1.2 When participating in normal working relationships, whether between the force and other organisations or between individuals, it is recognised that hospitality and reciprocation may be acceptable and that it can present the force in a positive way. The monetary value or perceived monetary value of the hospitality forms the essence of what is acceptable. This order sets a framework within which all West Midlands Police officers, staff and PCSOs may consider individual instances, seek advice and ultimate authority.
- 1.3 A modest degree of hospitality is welcomed by partners in public service and displays cordiality that can improve working relationships. A responsible approach to this area and the correct degree of control will see that this traditional means of greeting and appreciation remains a benefit to the force.

2. GUIDANCE.

- 2.1 The circumstances for either accepting or receiving gifts and hospitality are limited in order to retain public confidence. This applies to all police officers, staff and PCSOs. In all cases, permission should be sought from a line manager and, where appropriate, recorded in a central register (see section 3).

- 2.2 The term 'gift' should be taken to mean items of a token value such as desk top items and diaries. It may be that a gift of a higher value is offered; this may be due to cultural or traditional reasons and accepting such a gift may be acceptable. In cases of doubt, advice should be sought from line management and where circumstances do not justify acceptance, the gift should be politely refused. Where gifts and hospitality are offered by a contractor or supplier, known to be or likely to be on any list of tenderers or contractors, they must not be accepted without express permission.
- 2.3 This guidance relates to police officers, police staff and PCSOs in their employment within West Midlands Police. However, all officers, staff and PCSOs are expected to maintain the highest level of integrity at all times and to act in accordance with force values.
- 2.4 In general, hospitality is defined as provision of refreshments including drinks and/or food and should be employed in welcoming visitors and in expressing our appreciation of their visit. It may be engaged when participating in customary exchanges between organisations and individuals and in recognising support and contributions to our work.
- 2.5 Best practice would dictate that:
- a) Hospitality and gifts received are evidenced locally.
 - b) Hospitality and spends given (other than meetings/ceremonies etc) are recorded via the IProcurement purchase system using the appropriate cost code available.

N.B. (please refer to section 3 as to the appropriate values).

- 2.6 Providing a comprehensive list or summary of what is and is not acceptable is not practical and leaves too great an area subject to interpretation. Police officers, staff and PCSOs should act using their professional judgement, and always in the light of force values. In all cases, consideration as to what is proper and what may be seen to be proper should be given. However, certain events and products should be avoided especially where there is no tangible policing or community link or benefit and where embarrassment or reputational damage to the force could be caused. Such items may include events (e.g. sporting, theatrical or musical) and gifts of cash.

3. OFFICIAL RECORDING and AUTHORITY REQUIRED.

- 3.1 Appropriate gifts and hospitality **up to the value of £75** may be accepted and given without the recording of details via form WG450. However, all police officers and staff still have a duty to inform their own LPU/departmental line manager in writing for local audit recording and examination.
- 3.2 The acceptance of, or giving of gifts and hospitality **between £75 and up to £250**, must be authorised by the LPU Commander or Department Head. Where the gift or hospitality involves the LPU Commander or Department head, this should be referred to the Director of Resources.
- 3.3 Gifts or hospitality given or received that **exceed £250 in value** must be authorised by the Director of Resources.
- 3.4 The issue of aggregation should be considered by managers and supervisors. That is, the number of and the value of gifts or hospitality of any value where any one individual or outside body is involved.
- 3.5 All gifts or hospitality, given or received, above the value of £75 should be submitted to the Support Services Unit, Corporate Services Department along with form WG450 via the standards forms page of the intranet.
- 3.6 Corporate Services Department will maintain the force register. Nil returns (above the value of £75) will formally be recorded as certification that no gifts or hospitality have been given or received.

4. CONSEQUENCES.

- 4.1 Strict anti-corruption legislation exists to ensure the highest standards of conduct and probity are maintained by public servants. Breaches, particularly regarding suppliers, tenders and contracts can result in criminal offences being committed. Questions are asked by the media and the public regarding the levels/value of gifts and hospitality, either given or received. The force is bound, under the Freedom of Information Act, to publish that information. Inappropriate acceptance of or giving of gifts and hospitality can cause embarrassment and reputational risk to the force and to the individual.

CHIEF CONSTABLE