



Gifts and Hospitality Policy 2021

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1. Policy Statement

Wirral Council is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct and integrity in its business activities. The Gifts and Hospitality Policy and supporting Procedure sets out the Council's position if situations arise where employees and managers at all levels are offered gifts and hospitality in connection with their employment. This Policy applies to all Council employees (non-schools). There are specific provisions for employees of Merseyside Pension Fund (see section 4 of the Procedure).

2. Background

Wirral Council is funded almost entirely from public funds, either through grants from central government, or through council tax funded from the local taxpayer and it is essential that the Council can demonstrate the highest standards of probity in general, and specifically in relation to its dealings with third parties.

Acceptance of gifts or hospitality by officers could be construed by others as influencing decisions made by those officers. The basic principle of this Policy is that officers should not behave in a way that might give the impression that a gift or hospitality has influenced their decision. An officer should consider whether it would be reasonable for a member of the public to think so. It is not enough for an officer to be satisfied that they would not in fact be influenced, or that it was not the intention of the person offering the gift or hospitality to influence them.

The Council may face criminal liability for unlawful actions taken by its employees under the Bribery Act 2010. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Anti-Bribery Policy.

Under the terms of the Anti-Bribery Policy, it is unacceptable to:

- Accept payment from a third party that you know, or suspect is offered with the expectation that it will obtain a business advantage for them.
- Accept a gift or hospitality from a third party if you know or suspect that it is offered or provided with an expectation that a business advantage will be provided by the Council in return.

Employees should also refer to the Employee's Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy.

3. Commitment to Equality

Please identify which, if any, of the following Equality Duties this policy addresses:

Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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To advance equality of opportunity <input type="checkbox"/>
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To foster good relations between different groups of people <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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One of the main purposes of the Policy is to ensure that there is a standard process for reporting the receipt of gifts and hospitality.

It aims to ensure that employees who work for the Council are not discriminated against in their work.

4. Procedures

There is a Gifts & Hospitality procedure to support this policy. Employees are required to complete a gifts & hospitality declaration e-form via SelfServe.

The aims and objectives of the Gifts and Hospitality policy and procedure are:

- To make clear the standards to which the Council is expected to work to.
- To provide guidance for managers and employees on the process to follow when receiving gifts and hospitality.
- To raise awareness amongst managers and employees on the issues to consider and the general rules to apply when receiving gifts and hospitality.
- To monitor the receipt of gifts and hospitality by employees.
- To comply with the Bribery Act 2000

The Gifts & Hospitality Policy is designed to demonstrate the Council's commitment to the following principles:

- Ensuring transparency in the way it conducts its activities.
- Protecting employees from allegations of misconduct.

Operation of the policy is subject to regular audit with any reports (available from Information & Systems Team in Human Resources & Organisational Development), to senior leadership team and appropriate committees as and when required.

Any abuse or breach of the Procedures within this Policy will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, and this could, in some circumstances, lead to dismissal.

5. Supporting Documentation

- Gifts and Hospitality Procedure
- Gifts and Hospitality Policy Flowchart

6. Related Policies

- [Anti-Bribery Policy](#)
- [Employee Code of Conduct \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [Conflict of interest \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [Anti fraud and corruption \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

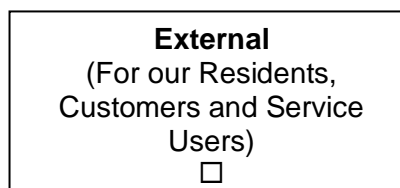
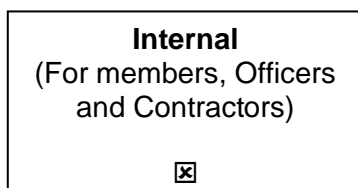
7. Consultation

The revised policy was shared with the Trade Unions and then approved by members at Employment & Appointments Committee on 14 February 2013.

The revisions had arisen following a report to the Audit and Risk Management Committee on 19 September 2012 (minute 30 refers) by the District Auditor on Gifts and Hospitality and Conflict of Interests.

8. Communication and Awareness

This policy is considered:



All employees are required to familiarise themselves and comply with this Policy and Procedure, including any future updates that may be issued from time to time by the Council.

Line Managers should ensure the employees are clear about the requirements of the Gifts & Hospitality Policy. This should be discussed regularly at Performance Appraisals, reviews and team meetings.

Chief Officers/Senior Managers should ensure that the requirements of the Policy are periodically discussed at all levels of Team Meetings.

9. Monitoring and Review

The table below sets out the ownership and review schedule for this policy. The Gifts & Hospitality Policy will be reviewed **annually** as part of the Human Resources & Organisational Development Policy Review Programme. However, it may be necessary to review as and when required, for example, due to legislative changes or if an issue arises around its effectiveness.

Document Ownership	
Policy owned by:	Human Resources & Organisational Development
Policy written by:	Tony Williams, Assistant Director: Human Resources & Organisational Development
Date policy written:	February 2013 (Updated)
Policy last reviewed:	December 2021

Version Control Table			
All changes to this document are recorded in this table.			
Date	Notes/Amendments	Officer	Next Scheduled Review Date
4 th December 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reformatted 	Andrea Morrell Foulkes, Human Resources Officer	14 th February 2014
February 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review – no change 	Andrea Morrell-Foulkes, Human Resources Officer	February 2015
February 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review – no change 	Andrea Morrell-Foulkes, Human Resources Officer	February 2016
February 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual review – no change 	Andrea Morrell-Foulkes, Human Resources Officer	February 2017
February 2017	Reviewed <i>Not published – awaiting system development to improve procedure and reporting mechanisms.</i>	Jess Bayley Graduate HR Officer	February 2018
June 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 4. Procedure updated – removal of M17 form, replaced with submission of e-form via SelfServe. Audit and reporting requirements. 	Andrea Morrell-Foulkes, Human Resources Officer	February 2019
December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reformatted 	Emily Burgess, Sarah Jones, Danial Howard,	December 2024

		Assistant Human Resource Officer	
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