



DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Gifts and Hospitality Procedure

To be used in conjunction with the Corporate Governance Policy Statement

Corporate Governance

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1. Purpose & Definition

- 1.1. The public has the right to expect the highest standards of conduct, integrity, and probity in the Public Service. Holders of public office must not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties. In addition, public servants must be open in their dealings. There should be no hidden motive for the decisions and actions they take, and information should be restricted only when the wider public interest demands.
- 1.2. A member of staff's personal reputation and that of the Service can be seriously jeopardised by the inappropriate acceptance of a gift or of hospitality and therefore members of staff are required to treat offers of gifts, favours, rewards, or hospitality with extreme caution.

- 1.3. This document sets out the procedures which must be followed when offers of gifts and hospitality are made to the Authority and/or the Service. It applies to both Members and Service Officers of the Authority, and to all Service staff, both uniformed and corporate.

2. Procedure Principles

- 2.1. It is a criminal offence for a Member, an Officer, or member of Service staff to accept gifts, either directly, or through a third party, by way of an inducement or reward for doing, or refraining from doing anything, or for showing favour or disfavour in an official capacity. Furthermore, no Member of the Authority or Service Officer or member of Service staff shall accept any fee or reward for work done other than the pay and allowances set out in his/her contract of employment, or agreed by the Chief Fire Officer, or by the Authority.
- 2.2. Members of the Authority or Service Officers and Service staff members are not entitled to accept personal gifts offered to him/her or members of his/her family, unless these are small items such as diaries, calendars, which may be accepted subject to the gift being added to the register. No alcohol should be accepted.
- 2.3. Policy Members of the Authority or Service Officers and Service staff members must not seek or receive preferential treatment by virtue of their dealings on behalf of the Authority or the Service. Offers of hospitality, including visits to exhibitions, social functions, and so on may be accepted where there is a genuine need to represent the Authority or the Service as part of one's official duties. For Service staff, these must be authorised in advance by a Member of the Strategic Leadership Team. Any offer, whether accepted or not, must be recorded in the register referred to in paragraph 3.1.3 below. Particular care must be taken when dealing with contractors or potential contractors and members of staff must be mindful that the acceptance of gifts or hospitality from actual or potential suppliers can be perceived as a conflict of interest.
- 2.4. Similarly, Members of the Authority or Service Officers and members of staff may not promise any favours or inducements to third parties. The only exceptions are donations/collections for the Firefighters Charity. Favours cannot be offered in return for a donation.
- 2.4. We are required, under [The Freedom of Information Act](#), to publish a redacted version of the Register of Gifts and Hospitality on our website. It is updated on a regular basis.

3. Responsibilities

3.1. Fire Authority Members

- 3.1.1. Since 1 July 2012, there has been no statutory requirement for Fire Authority Members to register offers of gifts and hospitality.
- 3.1.2. However, the Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority has decided that elected Members should, on a voluntary basis, register all offers of gifts and hospitality made to them in their capacity as Members of the Authority with a value of £50 or more, whether or not accepted.

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- 3.1.3. Members are required to register any offer of a gift or hospitality, to complete relevant paperwork ([Gifts & Hospitality Checklist](#)) and make sure this is returned to the Democratic Services Team. This will be added to the register of Members' gifts and hospitality which is open to public inspection and published on the Service's website.
- 3.1.4. Members are personally responsible for their decisions connected with their acceptance of gifts and hospitality, and for avoiding the risk of damage to public confidence in local government.
- 3.2. **Service Officers and Service Members of Staff**
 - 3.2.1. Both Service Officers and Service staff are personally responsible for their decisions on gifts and hospitality, and for ensuring the protection of public confidence in Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service when considering offers and particular care must be given to the following parts of the code.
 - 3.2.2. Service Officers and Service staff should register all offers of gifts and hospitality using the [Gifts & Hospitality Checklist](#) and submit to the Democratic Services Team.
 - 3.2.3. The Authority has no legal power to enter into a contract with a company designed to promote or advertise the wares of that company and as such there must be no excessive degree of advertising.
 - 3.2.4. Any agreement of a gift, favour, reward, or hospitality must be transparent and there must be complete openness.
 - 3.2.5. No preferential treatment or consideration must be given in any way to the sponsor or person making the offer.
 - 3.2.6. There must be no conflict with the interests of the Authority or the Service.
 - 3.2.7. The offer must be incidental to the Authority's statutory duties. In other words, whilst offers have the potential to enable the Authority to do things it could not otherwise afford, or to release resources for other uses, they must not be a substitute for expenditure which the Authority must incur in order to fulfil its statutory obligations.
 - 3.2.8. Careful consideration must be given to the timing of any offer, particularly in relation to contractors, or potential contractors. It would be inappropriate to accept a gift from a company with which the Authority or the Service has a contract, immediately prior to the renewal of the contract. This means you cannot accept any gift or hospitality where the giver is or may be involved in a procurement or managing a contract including just before contract renewal, including meals, entertainment, overnight accommodation, travel and holidays, this does not include a lift in a private or company car, a taxi, or refreshments in the course of your duty.
 - 3.2.9. Acceptance of an offer must in no way be construed as an endorsement of a particular product. If a company, having had an offer accepted, wishes to publicise the fact in its advertising material, it must seek the prior approval of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.
 - 3.2.10. There is no bar to the acceptance of an offer being acknowledged, but public acknowledgement must not become blatant advertising. Company logos must not

appear on equipment. This does not prevent a discreet plaque being affixed to acknowledge the offer. However, any such advertising must be agreed with the Deputy Chief Fire Officer.

- 3.2.11. Offers must not be accepted where there would be an association with products which the Authority or Service is likely to consider unacceptable or inappropriate such as tobacco and incendiary equipment. Care needs to be taken in this respect.
- 3.2.12. All offers must be recorded on the register, to include a description of the offer, an approximate financial value, and whether the offer has been accepted or refused. The register shall be open to public inspection.
- 3.2.13. The sponsorship of events may be acknowledged in programmes.
- 3.2.14. Advertising will not be permitted under any circumstances on premises occupied by the Authority or the Service.

3.3. **Who may decide whether to accept an offer?**

- 3.3.1. In the case of offers to the Authority, as opposed to the Service, the decision will be made by the Chair, after consultation with the Group Leaders. In the case of Service staff, the Head of Corporate Support should be consulted where there is any question or doubt.
- 3.3.2. Wherever a Service Officer or Member is unsure about the application of any part of this code, contact should be made to the Head of Corporate Support who will provide guidance and direct further action.
- 3.3.3. In accordance with the Authority's Financial Regulations, the prior approval of the Authority must be obtained before any offer in excess of £10,000 value is accepted.

3.4. **Sponsorship by the Authority or Service**

- 3.4.1. When consideration is being given to the Authority or the Service sponsoring an event or service, Members, Service Officers and Service staff, including any partners or members of their families, must not benefit from such sponsorship.
- 3.4.2. The agreement of the Deputy Chief Fire Officer must be obtained in advance.

3.5. **Loans**

- 3.5.1. Loans differ from gifts and sponsorship in that the asset being loaned remains in the ownership of the donating body. Consideration of the offer of loans must be in accordance with the above provisions of this procedure.
- 3.5.2. In addition, there is the issue of liability. Before accepting a loan, the Authority or the Service must ensure that it is not facing any unnecessary risk and that such risks are covered by the appropriate insurance arrangements or indemnities. In these cases, the advice of the Head of Financial Services and Clerk and Monitoring Officer should be sought via the Democratic Services Team.

3.6. Fire-fighters Charity, and Recreation and Welfare Fund

- 3.6.1. This procedure is not intended to be a bar to the practice whereby donations are made by the public to one of these funds, often as a gesture of thanks for a particular service. However, Service staff who receive such donations need to consider the risks detailed within this procedure and must ensure that all contributions received are recorded.

3.7 Vouchers and Reward Cards

- 3.7.1 When purchasing goods or services on behalf of the Service, benefits or rewards must not be accepted as a consequence of this. The most common example of this is loyalty card points or vouchers where purchasing fuel using Service fuel cards.
- 3.7.2 Where vouchers are only redeemable for other bona fide organisations (such as, charities or schools) these would not be deemed as providing an individual with any personal advantage and may be accepted.

4 Monitoring & Assurance

- 4.1 To monitor the success of this procedure and to ensure that our legal responsibilities are met, the Authority and Service will ensure that Members, Service Officers and Service staff are aware of their responsibilities within this procedure.
- 4.2 A reminder of the procedure will be published via the Service's weekly update in September annually by Democratic Services.
- 4.3 Fire Authority Members will be advised of the procedure during induction and an annual reminder will be communicated in September by Democratic Services.
- 4.4 A redacted version of the gifts and [hospitality register will be published on the Service's website](#) for public availability and updated regularly.
- 4.5 This procedure will be reviewed every three years by the Democratic Services Officer.

5 Document Reference

5.1 Forms to completed

[CO-FO-0018 - Gifts and Hospitality Checklist](#)

5.2 Document References

[The Freedom of Information Act](#)

[Register of Gifts and Hospitality on our website](#)

5.3 Impact Assessment Link

[IA102823 - CG 7 - Gifts and Hospitality Register](#)

6 Document Management

Policy Statement Reference: Corporate Governance			
Owner	Review Date	Author	Status
Vikki Shearing	01/11/2026	David Shaw	Published

6.1 Version Control:

Page & Par Ref	Date	Changes Made	Authorised By
Para 2.3	23/10/2025	Wording added to explain that the acceptance of gifts and hospitality from actual or potential suppliers can be perceived as a conflict of interest.	David Shaw
Para 3.2.8	23/10/2025	Wording added to explain what cannot be accepted as a gift etc when involved when managing a contract or on its renewal.	David Shaw
Entire document	24/07/2025	Number changed due to migration to new system	Connor Pepper

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