

Report 253/2009

Gifts and hospitality

Gifts, hospitality and the Code of Conduct: Gifts and hospitality are covered by paragraphs 8 and 13 of the Code.

What do I have to do?

- You must register any gifts or hospitality worth £25 or over.
- You must also register the donor (for example, the person, company or body) of the gift or hospitality.
- You only have to register gifts that you receive in connection with your official duties as a member. You do not have to register other gifts and hospitality, such as birthday gifts from family.
- Ask yourself “Have I been given this because I am a member?” If the answer is “yes” then you must register the item.
- You should register an accumulation of small gifts you receive from the same donor over a short period that add up to £25 or more.
- You must register the gift or hospitality and its donor within 28 days of receiving it, and if an accumulation, when it gets to £25.

What are the implications?

- You will have a personal interest in a matter if it relates to, or is likely to affect, the donor of the gift or hospitality that is registered.
- You must declare the existence and nature of the gift or hospitality, the donor and how the business under consideration relates to that donor. You must then decide whether that interest is also a prejudicial interest.
- If more than three years have passed since you registered the gift or hospitality, you will no longer have a personal interest in a matter that relates to or is likely to affect the donor.

For further information on interests see our factsheet on personal and prejudicial interests.

What happens if I do not know the value of the gift?

- We suggest you register it anyway as a matter of good practice.

Do I have to register gifts or hospitality I do not accept?

- No, but you may wish to do so as a matter of good practice.

What does “hospitality” mean under the Code?

- Hospitality can be defined as any food, drink, accommodation or entertainment provided free of charge or heavily discounted.

Do I have to register the interests of the donor of the gifts or hospitality?

- No. We believe the Code only requires you to register the gift or hospitality worth £25 or over, received in connection with your official duties, and the donor of that gift or hospitality.

Do I have to register gifts or hospitality from council-owned companies?

- Yes. Wholly-owned companies are separate bodies from the authority.

What about official gifts or hospitality given to the civic mayor or chair of a council?

- There are no special rules for those who serve as mayor or chair of an authority.
- Gifts that are clearly made to the authority do not need to be registered.
- Gifts made directly to a mayor or chair's charity appeal also do not need to be registered.
- We take the view that there is no requirement under the Code to register hospitality, if that hospitality has been extended to the office holder for the time being rather than the individual.

Find out more

The Code of Conduct: Guide for members May 2007 offers more guidance on the Code and can be downloaded [here](#).

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