

## **GUIDELINES ON THE RECEIPT AND PROVISION OF GIFTS AND/OR HOSPITALITY**

### **1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- 1.1 As civil servants we all have a responsibility to carry out, and be seen to carry out, our duties and conduct our business in a fair and equitable manner. It is important to recognise that accepting or providing a gift, hospitality or benefit could unwittingly compromise the integrity of both staff and the Department. As a consequence staff should not receive benefits of any kind from an individual or organisation which might reasonably be seen to compromise their personal judgement. Likewise, expenditure on hospitality or gifts should only be incurred where it is evidently in the business interests of the Department.
- 1.2 This paper sets out the procedures to be followed by all staff in the Department in relation to third party gifts and/or hospitality. The guidance is not designed to be prescriptive but to invite everyone in the Department to exercise judgement and propriety when considering offers of gifts and hospitality. These guidelines are intended to protect both individuals and the Department by establishing clear parameters and introducing the requirement for staff to register gifts and/or hospitality. **All members of staff should consult these guidelines prior to accepting or offering a gift or hospitality on behalf of the Department. These should be read in conjunction with DAO (DFP) 10/06**
- 1.3 Civil servants must conduct themselves with honesty and impartiality in the exercise of their duties. The fundamental principle is that an officer should not do anything which might give rise to the impression that he or she has been influenced by a gift or offer of hospitality. An official also faces legal obligations to act properly, specifically in receipt of hospitality, under the Prevention of Corruption Acts of 1906 and 1916. These Acts assume that any gift or consideration has been given corruptly, unless the contrary can be proved.

### **2. REGISTRATION OF CORPORATE GIFTS/HOSPITALITY/AWARDS etc**

- 2.1 DAO (DFP) 10/06, Appendix 2, Section 3 provides guidance on the monitoring arrangements which must be put in place regarding gifts and hospitality. Facilities Management Team (FMT) will continue to maintain a central record of instances where gifts and hospitality have been accepted / refused or supplied in the interests of the Department. The main purpose of the Departmental Register is to counter any possible accusation or suspicion of improper conduct by staff. This database will ensure, moreover, that urgent Parliamentary/Assembly

Questions can be answered promptly and accurately. Consequently Departmental gifts and hospitality monitoring forms have been changed to reflect the new requirements and copies of the amended forms are attached. The sample forms attached to DAO (DFP) 10/06 will not be utilised.

- 2.2 It is important that the Departmental Register is appropriately maintained and monitored for audit purposes. **The Permanent Secretary, Deputy Secretaries and each Head of Division (or nominated delegate) are therefore responsible for notifying FMT of all relevant offers of gifts or hospitality within their area of responsibility.** Registration forms for gifts and / or hospitality to be recorded are attached to this document and their use is explained below. At the end of each financial year, FMT will issue a record of gifts and hospitality to each Division to allow Directors to verify that records are accurate and comprehensive. The Departmental Register and Divisional records will be open to periodic inspection and will be included in Internal Audit programmes.
- 2.3 Whilst it is recognised that the exact cost of gifts and / or hospitality may not be known, you are expected to exercise careful judgement when assessing the approximate value and appropriate action to be taken. If in any doubt it is useful to consider whether the proposed acceptance or provision of gifts / hospitality could be satisfactorily defended in public.
- 2.4 For ease of reference, a table summarising roles and responsibilities in relation to gifts / hospitality is attached at Annex A. It should be noted that staff who fail to declare gifts / hospitality in accordance with the Departmental guidelines may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 2.5 When completing the Receipt of Hospitality form recipients should use estimated amounts for breakfasts, lunch and dinners. The following should be used as a guideline to the amounts :-
- Breakfast £10.00
  - Lunch £15.00
  - Dinner £30.00
  - Gala Dinner £50.00

**It should be noted that sandwich lunches do not need to be included on the register.**

### **3. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS / HOSPITALITY**

- 3.1 Guidance on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality can be found in DAO (DFP) 10/06, Appendix 2. Section 2 of this appendix sets out the principles governing

the acceptance of gifts and hospitality and provides specific advice on how these principles should be interpreted.

#### 4. PROVISION OF CORPORATE GIFTS

- 4.1 The Department does not normally provide gifts to visitors, including those from other GB Departments. It is recognised, however, that there may be exceptional occasions when it is appropriate for a gift or token of appreciation to be presented on behalf of the Department, for example, during international study visits etc. **Guidance should always be sought from the relevant Director before considering the presentation of a gift to a third party.** Gifts should only be acquired or presented when the request has been approved at Director level or above using the attached pro-forma *Provision of Corporate Gift*.
- 4.2 Facilities Management Team hold a small number of items which may be accessed by staff with the authorisation of the relevant Director. **Staff should, in the first instance, consider these items when the presentation of a corporate gift is deemed appropriate.** An up-to-date stocklist is available on the DEL Intranet under the Facilities Management Team category or by searching “corporate gifts” from the home page. Facilities Management Team will contact the requisitioning officer to arrange collection of the item(s) requested only upon receipt of a completed form approved at Director level or above.
- 4.3 In the event that a suitable gift cannot be identified from the existing store Facilities Management Team will, if requested, provide a catalogue of Belleek Pottery and will order the chosen item where approved by the relevant Director and adequate notice is given. This company has been selected in order to promote goods manufactured in Northern Ireland. Belleek has offered a discount to the Department of up to 30% on the recommended retail price for gift purchases on large orders. Engraving can also be organised, via the authorised outlet in Debenhams (Castle Court) or from the factory, subject to the overall cost (item plus engraving) falling within the cost restrictions (see below). If however an alternative item is required, it may be purchased directly with the **prior approval** of the relevant Director. **Full details of any items purchased directly must be notified to the Facilities Management Team for inclusion in the Corporate Gifts Register.**
- Gifts should only be offered where it is in the business interests of the Department;
  - as a general rule, gifts should not be presented to visiting Civil Servants;
  - gifts offered on behalf of the Department should normally promote Northern Ireland tourism and industry;
  - individual corporate gifts should not exceed a value of £50;
  - the selected gift should be charged to the requisitioning officer’s cost centre.

- 4.4 All corporate gifts presented to third party individuals or organisations must be recorded on the Departmental Register. Responsibility lies with the requisitioning officer and Director to ensure that the Departmental Register is updated. For audit purposes, completed forms approved at Director level or above must be forwarded to Facilities Management Team to be held with the Departmental Register.

## 5. PROVISION OF HOSPITALITY

- 5.1 Entertainment by the Department at public expense is justified only when the hospitality extended is considered to be in the direct interest of the Department or taxpayers. **Guidelines on the provision of hospitality are detailed in Finance Manual Volume 2, which is available on the DEL Intranet.** [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#) [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](#)  
Staff should refer to this document before organising any events to ensure that procedures are followed, audit trails are consistent and appropriate authorisation has been attained.
- 5.2 It is the responsibility of staff organising events and their authorising officers to ensure that levels of hospitality are not excessive and that the number of participants is appropriate. Authorising officers should bear these factors in mind when assessing requests to provide hospitality.

## 6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 As with all public expenditure, offers of gifts / hospitality should represent value for money and be incurred in accordance with the principles of regularity and propriety. In all cases, the provision of any gifts or hospitality should involve no reasonable suspicion that personal judgement or integrity has been compromised.
- 6.2 It should be emphasised that this guidance is designed to protect both individual members of staff and the Department in general. As the guidance cannot cover every eventuality, the advice of a senior manager and/or Director should be sought in any case where the propriety of accepting or supplying gifts or hospitality is in doubt.
- 6.3 Further information on these guidelines may be obtained from Maureen Doonan ☎ 902(57882) Facilities Management Team.

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## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

<b>All Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To be familiar with the Departmental guidelines</li> <li>- To notify Directors of all relevant offers of gifts/hospitality and seek approval where appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>Director of Corporate Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To take the lead advisory role on the provision/acceptance of gifts and hospitality</li> </ul>
<b>All Directors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To provide advice to staff on the acceptance or provision of gifts/hospitality</li> <li>- To ensure that completed authorisation forms are forwarded to Facilities Management Team for inclusion in the Departmental Register</li> </ul>
<b>Permanent Secretary and Grade 3s</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To maintain personal record of hospitality/gifts and ensure that the Departmental register is updated accordingly</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities Management Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To maintain the Departmental Register of corporate gifts/hospitality</li> <li>- To carry out an annual review of gifts/hospitality to ensure that central records are accurate</li> </ul>
<b>Internal Audit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To monitor compliance with Departmental guidelines and ensure that an appropriate audit trail is maintained</li> </ul>

**Department for Employment and Learning**  
**RECEIPT OR REFUSAL OF CORPORATE GIFT/HOSPITALITY**

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN RELATION TO ALL RELEVANT GIFTS OF HOSPITALITY WHICH ARE ACCEPTED OR REFUSED ON BEHALF OF THE DEPARTMENT. FORMS MUST BE AUTHORISED AT DIRECTOR LEVEL OR ABOVE AND FORWARDED TO FACILITIES MANAGEMENT TEAM FOR INCLUSION IN THE DEPARTMENTAL REGISTER. PLEASE READ THE GUIDELINES ON GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY PRIOR TO COMPLETING THIS FORM.

**1. DETAILS OF WHO THE GIFT WAS OFFERED TO**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Branch: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Division: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact No: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ultimate recipient (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. INFORMATION ON GIFT(S) OR HOSPITALITY. *To be completed by recipient only.***

(a) Source of gift(s)/hospitality: \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) Description & estimated value of gift(s)/hospitality: \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) Why was this offer made? \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) Date of offer: \_\_\_\_\_ (e) Offer accepted/refused: Accepted  Refused   
(f) Is there a current/potential contract with the donor? Yes  No  If yes give details:

(g) Please indicate reasons for acceptance/refusal of offer:

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. DIRECTOR AUTHORISATION. *To be completed by Head of Division (G5) or above only.***

Please tick as appropriate:  I approve the acceptance of gift(s)/hospitality described above  
 I note the refusal of gift(s)/hospitality described above

Reasons why approval has/has not been granted

(b) Is gift being returned?  Yes  No If so a letter should be issued.  
(c) Has the gift been used or disposed of?  Yes  No If so please give details:

(d) Has the gift been donated to a nominated charity?  Yes  No  
(e) Has the Gifts & Hospitality register been updated?  Yes  No

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**ALL OFFERS OF GIFTS OR HOSPITALITY OVER THE SET LIMITS, ACCEPTED OR REFUSED, MUST BE RECORDED ON THE DEPARTMENTAL REGISTER.** Please return completed forms to: Corporate Gifts/Hospitality, Facilities Management Team, Room 703, Adelaide House, Adelaide Street, Belfast, BT2 8FD. Alternatively the form can be faxed to 028 902(57888). If you require any assistance, contact 028 902(57863).

# Department for Employment and Learning CORPORATE GIFT REQUISITION FORM

PLEASE READ THE DEPARTMENTAL GUIDELINES ON GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY PRIOR TO COMPLETING THIS FORM. THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN RELATION TO ALL GIFTS TO THIRD PARTIES. FORMS MUST BE AUTHORISED AT DIRECTOR LEVEL OR ABOVE AND FORWARDED TO FACILITIES MANAGEMENT TEAM. UNAUTHORISED FORMS CANNOT BE PROCESSED.

## 1. APPLICANT DETAILS *To be completed by requisitioning officer*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_  
Branch: \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Division: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact No: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. INFORMATION ON GIFT(S) REQUESTED.

(a) Proposed Recipient(s) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Nature & Date of Event \_\_\_\_\_

(c) Please indicate reasons for provision of gift.

(d) Source of Gift / Hospitality – *Tick as appropriate.*

(i) Existing Departmental Stock

(ii) Belleek/Tyrone Crystal Catalogue

(e) Description & Estimated Value of Gift(s)

## 3. DIRECT OR AUTHORISATION. *To be completed by Head of Division (G5) or above only.*

I authorise  / do not authorise  the purchase of the gift(s) described above. *Tick as appropriate.*

(a) Reasons why approval has/has not been granted

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## RETURN OF OFFER OF GIFT/HOSPITALITY

(The content of this template should be tailored to suit each circumstance.)

**Contact Name**

**Name of Business**

**Name of Company**

**Manager / Head of Division**

**Address of Company**

**Office Address**

**Date**

**Dear**

The Northern Ireland Civil Service operates a Gift and Hospitality Policy to ensure high standards of propriety in the conduct of its business.

On account of public confidence, perception is as important as reality and because of this I am obliged to return your offer of **[INSERT: Name of gift / hospitality]**.

This is not in any way meant to offend or to imply that your **[gift/hospitality]** was offered in anything but the utmost good faith, but is designed to protect both individual members of staff and the Northern Ireland Civil Service. I hope you will accept our response in that spirit and that we can look forward to continued effective working relationships.

**Yours**