

HOSPITALITY AND GIFTS POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Tayside Contracts values its reputation and is committed to carrying out all its business ethically and with integrity. Employees, therefore, should not retain any fee or reward collected in connection with their work that could be considered to be a bribe or incentive.

This policy supports the culture of openness and transparency in Tayside Contracts' business transactions and should be read in conjunction with Tayside Contracts' Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy. The Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy will take precedence over this policy in the event of any inconsistency or uncertainty.

SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to all employees of Tayside Contracts. Employees are expected to uphold the key principles of public life as outlined within Tayside Contracts' Employee Code of Conduct. Employees who are members of professional bodies should also refer to their respective professional codes of conduct relating to acceptance of hospitality and gifts.

PRINCIPLES

Tayside Contracts employees must act and be seen to act in a manner that is fair, impartial, without favouritism or bias at all times. Gifts and hospitality must be offered or received and acknowledged openly and without any degree of secrecy attached.

Any acceptance or provision of hospitality and gifts must be in keeping with the following principles:

Principles on accepting hospitality and gifts

Hospitality and gifts should only be accepted by Tayside Contracts employees or their representatives if:

- The offer has been made for a proper purpose
- Acceptance is consistent with the purposes of Tayside Contracts
- It is appropriate and the value is reasonable and proportionate to the circumstances

Basic hospitality, i.e. refreshments at meetings, can be accepted without approval and does not need to be recorded.

Gifts of a trivial nature, i.e. gifts where the nature or branding of the gift mean it has no commercial value (calendars, pens etc.), can be accepted without approval and do not need to be recorded. Gifts of alcohol are not considered to be trivial in any circumstances.

Principles on offering hospitality and gifts

Hospitality and gifts may only be provided by Tayside Contracts employees or their representatives when the offer is consistent with the purposes of Tayside Contracts, the value is reasonable and proportionate and there is no inference of improper influence.

Provision of basic hospitality, i.e. refreshments at meetings, where the value falls within an employee's 'Expenditure Authorisation Limit', can be made without prior approval if the provision is in line with the principles outlined above and does not need to be recorded.

The provision of any other hospitality or the provision of gifts must not be made without the prior authorisation of the Managing Director.

APPROVAL

Employees are encouraged to use their judgement in hospitality and gift matters and must decline any offers/invitations where they believe acceptance would be contrary to this policy.

If an employee is inclined to accept an offer of hospitality or a gift they must seek approval from the Managing Director prior to accepting any offer or invitation, where practicable. It is accepted that there may be occasions, such as a meeting that has run on and the organiser suggests breaking for lunch and pays, where it is not possible to seek approval in advance.

The seriousness of any potential conflict of interests must be recognised. If approval has not been sought and/or a conflict of interests is considered to exist then disciplinary action may be taken against the employee.

Hospitality

Before deciding to refuse an offer of hospitality or seeking approval to accept an employee may wish to consider the following points:

- Would the invitation benefit Tayside Contracts directly by having an employee attend the event? Could the information on services/products be used to gain or improve relationships with other bodies, which could prove useful to the success of Tayside Contracts? Would Tayside Contracts benefit from the contacts made?
- Would the acceptance of the invitation be, in any way, inappropriate or place the employee under pressure in relation to any current or future contract issues involving Tayside Contracts?
- Could the decision be justified to the Joint Committee, press or public if asked?

In particular, employees directly responsible for letting or negotiating contracts or in the supervision/measurement of contracts should be extremely careful in accepting any offers of hospitality. This is especially important if an invitation is made from a company that is negotiating or tendering for a Tayside Contracts contract.

Gifts

Any gift with a value in excess of £50 must be refused. Any offer of cash must always be declined and must be reported to the Managing Director immediately.

Any gifts from contractors or suppliers offered at Christmas may be accepted and these should be given to the Managing Director's Personal Assistant for inclusion in a raffle, the proceeds of which will be given to charity. Contractors and suppliers should be made aware of this arrangement wherever possible.

Other gifts that may be considered acceptable over the course of the year would be vouchers, flowers, bottles of wine, whisky etc. given as thanks for participation in events/projects etc.

RECORDING OF HOSPITALITY AND GIFT OFFERS/ACCEPTANCE

A record of all invitations and acceptances/refusals should be logged in the Hospitality and Gifts Register, which will be retained and maintained by the Managing Director's Personal Assistant. Included in this book will be the record of the appropriate authorisations, the record of declined gifts/invitations and the record of gifts/invitations where permission to accept was not granted.

Any hospitality offered, which is not basic hospitality, should be notified to the Managing Director and permission sought regarding acceptance of the hospitality where practicable. If it has not been possible to obtain prior approval the Managing Director must still be notified. Any offers of hospitality, whether accepted or not, must be recorded.

Any gifts offered, which are not of a trivial nature, should be notified to the Managing Director and permission sought regarding acceptance prior to receipt of the gift where practicable. If it is not possible to obtain prior approval the Managing Director must still be notified. Any gift offered, whether accepted or not, must be recorded.

A record of all hospitality or gifts offered by an employee or representative of Tayside Contracts, with the exception of basic hospitality as outlined above, must also be logged in the Hospitality and Gifts Register.

It should be noted that the acceptance of hospitality and gifts is an area where perception should be considered more important than reality. Before accepting any offer of hospitality and/or gifts employees must exercise judgement about how acceptance might be perceived and consideration must be given to whether or not the benefit to Tayside Contracts through accepting hospitality and/or gifts will be outweighed by adverse third-party criticism.

There are occasions where the receipt of a gift or hospitality is unacceptable. Recording the receipt of the gift or the hospitality does not make it acceptable.

POLICY VIOLATIONS

Any breach of this policy will be regarded as misconduct and will be addressed in accordance with Tayside Contracts' Disciplinary Procedure.

Disciplinary action will be taken in the event of:

- Failure to declare gifts or hospitality accepted, other than the exceptions outlined within this policy
- Acceptance of gifts or hospitality without the necessary approval
- The use, or attempted use, of Tayside Contracts funds to purchase gifts or for the provision of hospitality without the necessary prior approval, other than the exceptions outlined within this policy
- Failure to maintain the Hospitality and Gifts Register

Tayside Contracts expects all offers of gifts or hospitality to be declared, even when these are rejected. Failure to declare declined offers will not be treated as a disciplinary matter in the first instance,

although repeated failures to declare declined offers will be regarded as misconduct and will be addressed.

RELATED POLICIES

The Hospitality and Gifts Policy links to the following policies which can be accessed on the Intranet, or requested from your line manager or from the HR Admin Team:

- The Confidential Disclosure of Information Policy
- Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Disciplinary Policy

The above list is not exhaustive.

POLICY REVIEW

The Hospitality and Gifts Policy will be reviewed at three yearly intervals, or as required by legislative changes.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION

Tayside Contracts respects the privacy of our employees, any personal data processed during the application of this policy will be in line with Data Protection Legislation. Further information on how we may process personal data for the purpose of applying this policy can be found in our Privacy Notice.

Should you have any queries or require further clarification regarding any aspects of this policy or related policies please contact, HR Services on 01382 812721 or employment.policies@tayside-contracts.co.uk

If you would like this document translated into another language or in another format such as audio or large print then please contact Angie Thompson, Equalities and Communications Manager on 01382 834165 or angie.thompson@tayside-contracts.co.uk