

# GLOUCESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP NHS TRUST

## POLICY ON OFFERS OF GIFTS AND PROVISION OF HOSPITALITY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This policy explains how staff should behave when:

- Offered gifts, services, entertainment , benefits in kind or hospitality and
- Providing hospitality

It is based upon guidance offered in Standards of Business Conduct for NHS Staff - January 1993.

### 2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

2.1 Gloucestershire Partnership NHS Trust staff are expected to:

- Ensure that the interest of clients remains paramount at all times;
- Be impartial and honest in the conduct of their official business;
- Use public funds entrusted to them to the best advantage of the service, ensuring value for money.

2.2 Gloucestershire Partnership NHS Trust staff must not abuse their official position for personal gain or to benefit their family or friends, or seek to advantage or further private business or other interests, in the course of their official business.

2.3 Staff must also make sure that they are not placed in a position which risks, or appears to risk, conflict between their private interests and their NHS duties.

2.4 The Standards of Business of Conduct draws attention to the fact that it is a criminal offence for a public service employee corruptly to accept any inducement or reward for doing, or refraining from doing anything, in their official capacity; or corruptly showing favour, or disfavour, in the handling of contracts.

2.5 Any money, gift or consideration received by a public service employee from a person or organisation holding or seeking to obtain a contract will be viewed by the courts as having been received corruptly unless the employee proves the contrary.

### 3. IMPLEMENTING THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#### 3.1 Offers of gifts, services, entertainment or benefits in kind

**KEY MESSAGE:**

Staff must refuse offers of gifts, services, entertainments and benefits in kind from clients, clients' relatives and outside bodies.

- 3.1.1 The only offers staff may accept are isolated gifts of a trivial character or inexpensive seasonal gifts, such as calendars and small tokens of gratitude from a client or a client's relatives.
- 3.1.2 A small token of gratitude from a client or client's relative may only be accepted after an episode of care has taken place - never before. The value of what is being accepted should not be more than £15 and should never be in the form of cash or a cheque.
- 3.1.3 Staff who are unsure whether it is all right to accept an offer should seek advice from their line manager. They may also decline the offer.
- 3.1.4 The Trust maintains a register for recording gifts and hospitality.
- 3.1.5 Staff offered gift(s) should complete a Record of Hospitality and Gifts offered when the gift(s) are accepted and forward it to the Corporate Communications and Business Manager.

### **3.2 Offers of hospitality**

**KEY MESSAGE:**

Staff must refuse hospitality, which is not appropriate and proportionate in the circumstances

- 3.2.1 Staff may accept modest hospitality where it is both appropriate and proportionate in the circumstances, for example a working lunch.
- 3.2.2 The test for whether something is modest, appropriate and proportionate is to ask whether Gloucestershire Partnership NHS Trust would in the same circumstances offer hospitality, and would it be of a similar type and scale.
- 3.2.3 Staff who are unsure whether it is right to accept an offer of hospitality should seek advice from their line manager. They may also decline the offer.
- 3.2.4 The Trust maintains a register for recording gifts and hospitality.
- 3.2.5 Staff offered hospitality should complete a Record of Hospitality and Gifts offered when the hospitality is accepted and forward it to the Corporate Communications and Business Manager.

### **3.3 Offers of hospitality and educational opportunities**

- 3.3.1 Where a member of staff wishes to take advantage of an educational event where the level of hospitality is likely to exceed that, which the Trust would offer, a record of the hospitality must be kept by the individual and submitted on an annual basis to the Corporate Communications and Business Manager for inclusion in the Trust's register of gifts and hospitality.

3.3.2 Staff need to be aware of what their professional code says about offers of hospitality in the context of training and education. The relevant bodies are listed as Appendix A.

### **3.4 Providing hospitality**

3.4.1 The budget holder who is to pay for the hospitality must give their prior approval before expenditure is incurred.

3.4.2 The budget holder should be aware that spending NHS money on hospitality is open to challenge by internal and external auditors, who will judge whether the expenditure was reasonable.

3.4.3 The level of hospitality offered must therefore be appropriate and in proportion to the occasion, for example where Trust staff are assembled to conduct business, it is reasonable to provide refreshments.

### **3.5 Providing hospitality from the Corporate budget**

3.5.1 It is anticipated that corporate hospitality will rarely be given, and when it is, it will require the express permission of a Board member.

3.5.2 Corporate hospitality should not be extended to spouses/partners of staff or guests unless the circumstances fully justify this. This should be cleared with the Chief Executive.

3.5.3 Permission to provide corporate hospitality must be given by a Director who is not participating in the event.

3.5.4 Where the Chief Executive is to be a recipient of trust-funded hospitality, it should be cleared with the Chairman.

3.5.5 If both the Chief Executive and the Chairman are to be recipients, then approval should be sought from the Chair of the Audit Committee.

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## Appendix A

### List of Professional Bodies

Association of Professional Music Therapists
British Association of Arts Therapists
British Association of Dramatherapists
British Association of Occupational Therapists(BAOT)/College of Occupational Therapists (COT)
British Psychological Society (BPS)
Chartered Society of Physiotherapists
General Medical Council
General Social Care Council
Health Professionals Council
Nursing and Midwifery Council
Royal College Of Speech and Language Therapists