



**PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

**GUIDANCE ON THE ACCEPTANCE AND
PROVISION OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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1. INTRODUCTION

1. The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) has a responsibility to ensure the regularity and propriety of the public finances for which it is accountable. To maintain the PPS's integrity and reputation, there is a need for transparent practices that withstand public scrutiny and meet expectations in terms of the efficient use of available resources and avoidance of extravagance.
2. This guidance on the acceptance and provision of gifts, hospitality and rewards¹ is issued taking account of **DAO 10/06** which provides a common NICS wide set of guidelines on the acceptance and provision of hospitality. The DAO required departments to review their current guidelines to ensure that their guidance on the *provision* of hospitality is 'fit for purpose' and to adopt the NICS guidance prepared by DFP Corporate HR on the *acceptance* of gifts and hospitality.
3. HM Treasury's publication, 'Regularity, Propriety and Value for Money' (November 1994) states that "the way in which our public service goes about its business, including the way individual public servants go about theirs, is of prime importance to every head of department, chief executive and public servant." The public expects the conduct of officials to be above reasonable reproach, therefore official entertainment should be, and should be seen to be, unostentatious, and on a modest scale, and it should not be such as to provoke adverse public comment. All PPS staff have a responsibility to be ethical by complying with the NICS Code of Ethics, reporting acts of improper conduct and adopting the highest standards of impartiality, objectivity and propriety in everything they do.
4. **DAO 06/12** Departmental Delegations / Requirements for DFP approval also requires departments to obtain Supply approval for all gifts in excess of £100. PPS Finance should be contacted and will undertake to obtain this approval on behalf of the business area. The requirements of staff are also set out in Section 6.01 Standards of Conduct of the NICS HR Handbook and in DAO 10/06.
5. The following guidance is designed to protect both individual members of staff and the Department in general. External people acting on behalf of PPS (e.g., Non-Executive Board Members, employees on secondment to and from the PPS, consultants, contracted staff, etc.) must also adhere to the principles of this guidance and should be notified of this requirement before commencing work in the Department.
6. This guidance is effective immediately and will be subject to review when required.

¹ The principles set out in this guidance also apply to the provision and acceptance of rewards.

Purpose

7. The purpose of this document is to:
 - a. Outline for all PPS staff, the guidelines and fundamental principles for the provision and acceptance of gifts, hospitality and rewards;
 - b. Provide advice on how hospitality either provided by or offered / accepted by PPS staff should be approved;
 - c. Provide advice on whether and how the provision and acceptance of hospitality by PPS staff should be recorded;
 - d. Outline roles and responsibilities for staff at all levels within PPS.
8. This guidance should also be seen as applying to gifts or hospitality offered to spouses, partners or other associates of an official if it could be perceived that the gift or hospitality is in fact for the benefit of the official.
9. The guidance does not seek to supply a prescriptive list of the gifts or hospitality that can be provided or accepted but rather seeks to provide the ethical framework for decision making in relation to the provision and acceptance.
10. Any breach of the rules of conduct can lead to disciplinary action and in some circumstances can be a criminal offence.

Legal obligations & fundamental principles

11. The Bribery Act 2010 came into effect on 1 July 2011. It defines four new criminal offences of offering or paying a bribe; requesting or receiving a bribe; bribing a foreign public official; and failure of commercial organisations to prevent bribery by persons associated with them. For offences committed before the 1 July 2011 which involved the offering, giving, soliciting or acceptance of an inducement or reward that may influence the actions taken by the authority, its members or officers these will fall under the Prevention of Corrupt Practices Acts.
12. The basic requirement, set out in the Standards of Conduct section of the NICS HR Handbook, is that civil servants should conduct themselves with honesty and impartiality in the exercise of their duties. As a consequence, staff must not use public resources for personal benefit, or receive benefits of any kind from a third party which might reasonably be seen to compromise their personal judgement, integrity or impartiality. In this field, **perception is as important as reality**.
13. Any hospitality offered or received should further the Government or taxpayers' interest and involve no reasonable suspicion that personal judgement or integrity has been compromised. HMT's document on Regularity, Propriety and Value for Money suggests a test to apply if there is a question mark over whether a proposed course of action meets the requirements of propriety – ***"could this course of action be satisfactorily defended in public?"*** This is a useful test in both the acceptance and provision of gifts and hospitality.

14. In accepting offers of gifts or hospitality from a third party, the fundamental principle is that an officer should not do anything which might give rise to the impression that they have been influenced by a gift or consideration to show bias for or against any person or organisation while carrying out official duties.
15. For the provision of hospitality by PPS staff, it is acknowledged that in some instances cultivating and maintaining contacts with outside groups is essential, however, as with all public expenditure, provision of hospitality expenditure should be value for money and incurred in accordance with the principles of regularity and propriety. The 'Seven Principles of Public Life' (often referred to as the Nolan Principles), which were endorsed in Spending Public Money: Governance and Audit Issues (March 1996), capture the key characteristics of propriety and they are included in **Annex 1**. Whilst it can be difficult not to offer hospitality as a gesture of reciprocity, this should not be the sole reason for justifying the expenditure. The provision of hospitality should generally be limited to a meal or light refreshments.
16. It is not practical to draw up a sliding scale for everything falling under the umbrella of provision of hospitality. Some events will justify a much greater outlay than others and judgements on the scale of provision should be based on common sense considerations.

Situations not covered by the guidance

17. It is recognised that there may be cases where, in the interest of the department, flexibility in interpretation of the strict rules may be necessary. In such instances, approval must be obtained in writing from an officer of Grade 5 or above which clearly details:
 - a. Why the request falls outside the boundaries of what is normally allowable;
 - b. Why it is considered necessary to provide or receive such hospitality;
 - c. How it will directly benefit the department; and
 - d. The expected consequences of the request being refused.

2. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY OFFERED TO US

18. Each Division will maintain a 'Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us' recording all gifts and hospitality offered to and accepted or rejected by PPS staff, their spouses, partners, etc. or those working on behalf of PPS.² A sample template for the 'Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us' is included at **Annex 2**.
19. The Registers will be subject to the following monitoring arrangements;
 - a. Heads of Divisions will be responsible for monitoring the registers of their respective business areas on a quarterly basis;
 - b. The Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change will be responsible for monitoring the offer / receipt of gifts and hospitality by Senior Civil Service colleagues and Non-Executive Board Members within PPS on an annual basis;
 - c. The Audit & Risk Committee will review the registers on an annual basis.
20. It will be the responsibility of Heads of Divisions to ensure that all staff are made aware of this guidance and that registers are in place and properly maintained and updated. A separate register will be held for each Division, for senior civil service and for Non-Executive Board members.
21. Each register should record expensive gifts and/or hospitality that have been accepted or rejected. It is not necessary to include inexpensive gifts on the register (such as calendars, pens, diaries). **Annex 3** provides guidance on common types of gifts and hospitality and the treatment required. Paragraphs 24 to 28 below also provide further guidance in addition to Annex 3.
22. Each register will be open to periodic central inspection and may be included in Internal Audit inspections. The Head of Finance also has access to enable inspection and publication of the registers. In addition, the registers are subject to Freedom of Information (FOI) queries. Each register will be published annually on the PPS website, and FOI requesters will be referred to the published information. All staff should bear this in mind when deciding on the acceptance of any gift or hospitality.

Staff involved in the procurement or monitoring of a contract

23. Apart from trivial/inexpensive seasonal gifts, such as diaries, no gifts or hospitality of any kind from any source should be accepted by anyone involved in the procurement or monitoring of a contract. This will ensure that no criticism can be made regarding bias to a particular company or supplier.

² Division includes the following business areas: Belfast Region, Northern Region, Eastern Region, Western & Southern Region, High Court & International, Fraud & Departmental, Central Prosecutions, Policy, Corporate Services, Senior Civil Service / Non-Executive Board Members.

Gifts received in recognition of work done

24. On no account should a gift or gratuity be solicited or requested. Where gifts by way of gratuities, vouchers or book tokens, etc. for lectures, broadcasts or similar occurrences are offered, then acceptance should be based on how much of the preparatory work for the event was done in the officer's own time, how much in official time and the extent to which Departmental resources, other than, for example, use of an officially issued laptop at home, were used in the preparation. The following guidelines should be applied:
- a. If the preparation was carried out entirely in the individual's own time and the event took place outside normal working hours at no expense to the Department, it would be acceptable for the individual officer to retain the whole fee, token or other gift;
 - b. If, however, the preparation was done wholly in Departmental time with use of Department resources, no gifts or fee should be accepted unless the event is carried out outside of normal working hours when a gift or token to the value of **up to £50** is acceptable; and
 - c. If the preparation was carried out and the lecture, etc. was delivered in an officer's own time but Departmental facilities were used for typing, preparation of Powerpoint / overheads, etc. then a gift or token to the value of **not more than £75** is acceptable.
25. In the case of either b or c, Departments can, if they so choose, charge the organisation or body a fee based on the salary costs of the individual and/or the use of resources. If a series of gifts from the same source exceed the monetary limits set out above the same rules apply.

Awards or prizes

26. Staff should consult with their line management if they are offered an award or prize in connection with their official duties. They will normally be allowed to keep it provided:
- a. There is no risk of public criticism;
 - b. It is offered strictly in accordance with personal achievement; and
 - c. It is not in the nature of a gift nor can be construed as a gift, inducement or payment for a publication or invention to which other rules apply.

General principles

27. The main point is that in accepting hospitality, staff need to be aware of and guard against, the dangers of misrepresentation or perception of favouritism by a competitor of the host.
28. To sum up, in deciding whether hospitality can be accepted, staff should consider if it:
- a. Is likely to help business effectiveness;
 - b. Places no obligation or perceived obligation on the recipient;
 - c. Is not frequent, lavish or prolonged;
 - d. Is unconnected with any decision affecting the organisation or the individual offering it;
 - e. Can be justified; and

- f. Provides benefits to the PPS, which outweigh the risk of possible misrepresentation of the hospitality.

Approval levels and recording of offers/acceptance of hospitality

- 29. A table at **Annex 3** provides details on the level of approval required for acceptance of gifts and hospitality to PPS staff. It also provides clear advice on the recording of all such offers within the registers and any other action which may be required in relation to the offers of gifts and hospitality.
- 30. If gifts or hospitality are received, then approval of the Head of Division / Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change should be sought, using the template provided at **Annex 4**. If the recipient has declined or intends to decline the offer of gifts or hospitality, they need only send details of the offer to their line manager for inclusion in the register. **Annex 5** provides wording which can be used if a gift / hospitality offered is being declined.
- 31. Staff who fail to declare to the 'Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us' in accordance with the above principles should be aware they may be subject to disciplinary action.

3. PROVISION OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

Definition of hospitality

32. For the purpose of this guidance, hospitality refers to:

“Meals, beverages, light refreshments and entertainment of any type provided out of public funds to anyone, be they a public servant or official, representative of a public or private body or organisation, or a private individual.”

33. The NICS Staff Handbook contains separate rules for the payment of subsistence, lodging and other similar allowances, which are designed to meet the extra cost incurred by officers away from home or office on official duty. The guidance for the provision of gifts and hospitality is intended to complement the standard subsistence rules rather than replace them.

Justification of hospitality

34. The primary consideration for the justification for expenditure on gifts and hospitality to be provided by PPS is that the gift or hospitality should be in the direct interest of the department. The scale of the gift or hospitality provided should be proportionate to the needs of the occasion and the status and number of guests.

35. All requests to extend hospitality should be accompanied by supporting documentation to enable the authorising officer to make the decision on the provision of the hospitality proposed. This documentation should include:

36. A written request for permission to extend hospitality and for the type and scale of hospitality proposed;

- a. A guest list, detailing employing organisations and, if not immediately apparent, reasons for the invitation;
- b. Written approval for the type and scale and estimated cost of hospitality proposed and for the guest list;
- c. If appropriate, evidence of having followed Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) guidelines and of having sought the best deal; and
- d. Receipts / invoices where appropriate, detailing separately the purchase of food, drink and any other type of entertainment.

37. A pro-forma approval form for the provision of hospitality is included in **Annex 6**. This should be used for all events where the cost is expected to exceed £100. The pro-forma must be approved at a level not below Grade 5 or equivalent prior to any expenditure being incurred.

38. The division will also need to obtain approval from the Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change or the Accounting Officer for expenditure greater than £300 and for situations outlined in **Annex 7**.

39. The pro-forma approval form is not required in circumstances where the cost of the meals or refreshments is already built in to the price for the training course, conference, etc. provided by a third party.

Types of gifts and hospitality and procedures to follow

Management hospitality

40. Strictly limited hospitality for fellow civil servants at public expense is allowed on special occasions or for special purposes. Authorising Officers at a level not below Grade 5 or equivalent may approve expenditure on management hospitality **up to a limit of £4.25 per head**. Prior approval must be sought from the Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change or Accounting Officer as per **Annex 7** for any expenditure outside this delegated limit.
41. Approval should only be given when it is regarded as conducive to good management and examples might include:
- a. working lunches to carry forward departmental business either internally or with representatives of other Government Departments;
 - b. meetings with outside bodies and agencies or overseas visitors and guests; or
 - c. the provision of refreshment to enable a Minister or senior official to meet junior staff informally in the interests of better communication.
42. Management hospitality must always be used sparingly and at modest cost, using Civil Service facilities whenever possible.

General meetings

43. It is sometimes necessary for officials to host morning or afternoon meetings to which representatives of other Departments, civil servants in an unofficial capacity (e.g. Trade Union representatives) or persons outside the PPS are asked to attend. The provision of tea/coffee and biscuits/scones at Departmental expense at meetings of this kind is permissible.
44. Modest hospitality may also be provided at internal meetings to facilitate business needs if it is considered to be cost effective and in the interests of efficiency.

Working lunches

45. Where it is simply not possible to accommodate urgent meetings, other than during lunchtime, staff at Grade 5 and above may consider it cost effective and in the interests of efficiency to provide a modest snack/lunch for staff with costs kept to a minimum. This might typically involve sandwiches/finger buffet, fruit/yoghurt and tea/coffee.

46. Where lunchtime meetings require the provision of refreshments, the cost per person should not exceed the daily subsistence allowances.

Training courses/development days/seminars/workshops/conferences

47. In general, the provision of meals and refreshments in these circumstances should be reasonable and within the daily subsistence allowances.
48. Where it is convenient, the staff canteen should be used to allow a break for participants – in these instances the participants should pay for their own refreshments.
49. Where a staff canteen is not available, refreshments provided at morning or afternoon sessions should be limited to tea/coffee and scones/biscuits. Lunch may be provided if it facilitates the running of the course.

Dining – internal and external venues

50. Internal conference and dining facilities should be considered as a first choice for entertaining guests, particularly when numbers are relatively small. For example, conference rooms or boardrooms in Government buildings should be used if available, and consideration should be given to providing sandwiches or a snack meal from a Departmental canteen or local caterer.
51. In order to ensure value for money, services provided in-house should fall within the following standard price ranges:
- a. management hospitality £4.25 per head ;
 - b. training courses and conferences - finger buffet £4.25 per head;
 - c. formal breakfast or lunch £10.00 per head;
 - d. formal evening meal £25.00 per head
52. These figures do not include the cost of any drinks and the normal expectation is that alcoholic drinks should only be provided at Departmental expense for evening meals. If external contractors are used, the food provided will be of a similar standard to that which would be provided in-house but it is recognised that the cost per head will be greater to cover the cost of contractor staff.
53. Unless there are compelling circumstances, such as the availability of particular facilities, expensive hotels and restaurants should be avoided when entertaining guests and, if available, a fixed or limited choice menu at a set price should be selected.
54. When guests are entertained at hotels, restaurants or similar venues, the total cost per head including meal, refreshments and any service charge or tip should be within the following financial limits:
- a. Lunch - up to a maximum of **£12.50 per head**; and
 - b. Dinner - up to a maximum of **£35.00 per head**.

55. In normal circumstances reimbursement of expenditure for alcohol will only be permitted up to one-third of the total cost involved.

Promotion and recruitment board panel members

56. Light refreshments consisting of tea/coffee and biscuits/scones may be provided to recruitment or promotion board panel members. Separate written approval is not necessary in these circumstances.
57. It is recommended that members of panels should not normally be provided with lunch, but each case should be considered separately, taking into account factors like time constraints prohibiting the panel taking lunch or the panel including an outside assessor.

Farewell parties

58. Farewell parties for civil or other public servants may not be funded from public funds and all such occasions should be treated as private ventures. This remains the position whether or not a proportion of the guests are “outsiders”.

Expenditure on official gifts

59. Gifts of a trivial or inexpensive nature (**not greater than £10**) can be provided and examples of this would include pens or other stationery provided at training events which promote the work of the PPS.
60. Official gifts should not be regarded as part of the normal conduct of Departmental business - gifts to members of staff or officials within the PPS family would not usually be deemed to fall within normal conduct. It may be the case though that some form of acknowledgement or recognition should be provided e.g. to a person outside PPS who has presented a seminar without charging a fee. In these circumstances, it may be appropriate to provide a modest gift up to **a maximum value of £50 per individual** but prior approval for doing so must be sought from the Head of Division of the business area making the gift.
61. Prior approval should be obtained from the Senior Assistant Director – Resources and Change or Accounting Officer as per **Annex 7**, where the cost of the proposed **gift exceeds £50 per individual**.
62. Prior approval should be obtained from DFP where the cost of the proposed **gift exceeds £100 per individual**.

General rules

63. **Tobacco** products should not be provided from public funds under any circumstances.
64. **Alcohol** should not normally be provided for lunches or other daytime activities. For evening dinner or events, it is permissible to provide alcohol at a

reasonable level and cost. In normal circumstances reimbursement of expenditure for alcohol will only be permitted up to one-third of the total cost involved.

65. If a **service charge** is not included in the restaurant or hotel bill, a tip of up to 10% is reasonable but this should be kept within the maximum costs specified at paragraph 54.
66. **Procurement** guidance for expenditure on goods and services in respect of quotations etc. applies equally to hospitality expenditure.
67. No **spouses, partners or other associates** of PPS officials should receive official hospitality other than in exceptional circumstances or with the specific agreement of the Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change.
68. Staff should not claim any **subsistence allowance** where lunch, dinner, refreshment etc. has been provided at public expense.
69. Speakers and distinguished guests at conferences and courses may be invited to lunch and/or dinner, including drinks, at PPS expense. However, an official who is attending other than as organiser or host will **not normally be reimbursed** for any hospitality which he/she offers at such a function.
70. **Public funds should not be used** to provide hospitality for visits to theatres, sporting events or other forms of public entertainment.
71. Gifts or hospitality of any kind should not normally be provided to companies or suppliers by anyone involved in the **procurement or monitoring of a contract**. However, where there is a long-term relationship with a supplier on a partnership basis, it is acceptable to offer occasional hospitality where this can be justified in the interests of the Department.

Situations not covered by guidelines

72. It is recognised that there may be cases where, in the interests of the Department, flexibility in interpretation of the strict rules may be necessary. However, prior approval for such situations must be obtained in writing from the Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change or Accounting Officer as per **Annex 7**.
73. In addition to the normal information required, the request should clearly detail:
 - a. why the request falls outside the boundaries of what is normally allowable;
 - b. why it is considered necessary to provide such hospitality;
 - c. how it will directly benefit the Department; and
 - d. the expected consequences of the request being refused.

Authorising provision of hospitality

74. Authorisation procedures for payment of hospitality where the venue is outside government buildings and/or the refreshments are supplied by outside caterers are the same as those for all types of goods and services. In all cases authorising officers should ensure that the expenditure was properly incurred and that the hospitality extended falls with the terms approved.
75. When choosing venues for hospitality or meals to be provided, the most expensive hotels and restaurants should be avoided, unless there are compelling reasons such as the availability of particular facilities, when choosing venues. Where a meal is to be provided, a fixed price menu should normally be agreed in advance.
76. All expenditure on hospitality must be **clearly** identified as such and charged to the expense code for hospitality. It is not permissible to obscure the purpose of the expenditure on hospitality by subsuming such expenditure within other expense codes. Hospitality budgets should be created where required. Official hospitality should be contained within approved budgets.
77. Copies of all documentation should be held in the appropriate branches and be available for audit inspection.

Classification and identification of hospitality and events expenditure

78. It is important to ensure that all expenditure on Hospitality and Events is recorded correctly. Paragraph 82 outlines which account codes to use. Expenditure for these types of events normally falls within one of the following main categories:
 - a. **Conference, seminars, workshops** – all hospitality costs associated with a conference organised by the PPS involving one or more external stakeholders;
 - b. **Official visitors** – an event, formal or informal, hosted by PPS where one or more external guests are invited and provided with any form of food or drink;
 - c. **General Hospitality** – costs for food and drink provided for internal meetings and training events where all the attendees must be PPS employees - if any external guests attend (excluding trainer) then it must be treated as hospitality.
79. The following are examples of expenditure that might be incurred under each of these headings but this is not an exhaustive list:

Conferences, seminars and workshops

- All costs associated with a PPS Conference;
- Criminal Justice seminars;
- The costs of hiring professional conference management skills;
- Costs associated with conferences including backdrops, printed material and signage; and
- Policy consultation with stakeholders.

Hospitality – Official Visitors

- Working dinners with senior officials from within the Department or wider Civil Service
- A lunch hosted by a Director for a visiting international delegation or group of visiting officials at a local restaurant.

General hospitality (Catering)

- Tea and coffee provided at the end of a staff team meeting;
- Refreshments provided during a business meeting;
- Refreshments provided during branch development days.

80. All invoices submitted for payment must include the following information clearly identified:

- a. whether it is general hospitality (catering), conference, or official visits;
- b. the purpose of the event;
- c. the names of people who attended.

81. VISA (or other credit/debit card) receipts on their own do not represent adequate audit evidence to support the expenditure incurred. Invoices from suppliers must always be submitted to confirm the split between food and alcohol.

82. Hospitality expenditure must be separately identified in the Department's accounts for reporting purposes and therefore should not be coded to other areas such as general expenses. Expenditure will normally fall within one of the following expense codes:

- 54200 – Hospitality – Programme code
- 54200 – Hospitality – plus Analysis 1 code 235400 Official Visitor Hospitality costs - Programme code
- 53470 – Contract Catering costs – Programme code
- 51180 – Training & Development Catering costs – Programme code
- 53040 – Exhibition & Conference – Catering – Programme code

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE ACCEPTANCE AND/OR PROVISION OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY

Employees

83. Employees must not use public resources for personal benefit or receive benefits in kind from a third party which may be seen to compromise their judgement or integrity. Care should be taken to avoid actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest when employing consultants and procuring goods and services.

Line Managers

84. Line Managers should be satisfied that any expenditure on gifts and hospitality incurred is in the best interest of the organisation, provides value for money and complies with current policies and guidelines. Line Managers should ensure that all staff comply with guidance on both the acceptance and provision of gifts and hospitality.

Approving Officers

85. Approving officers are reminded of their responsibility for ensuring adherence to the guidelines. It is important that the Accounting Officer has a defence against charges that the level of gifts and hospitality accepted or provided is excessive or that the department's staff are being entertained at the taxpayer's expense. Where there is doubt about any particular event, Approving Officers should seek advice or err on the side of caution and reject the request.
86. Officers authorising payments are reminded of their responsibility to ensure that the gifts and hospitality extended be properly approved.

Head of Finance

87. The Head of Finance has an advisory role on gifts and hospitality in the department, ensuring that guidelines are in place in respect of the provision of gifts or hospitality and that any possible conflicts of interest are identified and that appropriate action is taken to resolve them.
88. The Head of Finance also has an oversight role on the acceptance of gifts and hospitality and is responsible for the publication of the department's 'Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us' on the PPS website.

Audit and Risk Committee

89. The Audit and Risk Committee will periodically review the department's Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered to Us and provide general advice on good practice.

Internal Audit

90. Internal Audit has a role in the monitoring of compliance against policy and guidance. Additionally, Internal Audit is available to provide advice and guidance on matters relating to the acceptance or provision of gifts and hospitality.

Heads of Divisions

91. Heads of Divisions have a responsibility to take decisions affecting the acceptance and provision of gifts and hospitality within their Divisions. In order to counter any possible accusation or suspicion or improper conduct by staff in the department, each Head of Division has a responsibility to ensure that a 'Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us' is maintained within their area of responsibility.

Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change

92. The Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change has an advisory and leadership role in support of the Director.

Director

93. The Director, as Accounting Officer, has a leadership role as regards propriety, his actions and behaviour should set a high standard for the organisation. The essence of an Accounting Officer's role is a personal responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances for which he is answerable; for the keeping of proper accounts; for prudent and economical administration; for the avoidance of waste and extravagance; and for the efficient and effective use of the available resources.

Other related documents / government principles

94. A list of related documents and government principles is attached at **Annex 8**.

Queries

Any queries on the content of this guidance should be directed to Head of Finance, Tel. 028 90 544750 (network 44750).

ANNEX 1 - THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

Below is a section from the First Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life. These “Seven Principles of Public Life” (or Nolan principles) capture the key characteristics of propriety and is a reminder that issues of propriety and corporate governance are clearly linked.

Selflessness	Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.
Integrity	Holders of public office should 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
Objectivity	In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
Accountability	Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
Openness	Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
Honesty	Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relation to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interests.
Leadership	Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

ANNEX 2 - REGISTER OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY OFFERED TO US

Organisation:

Public Prosecution Service

Division:

Year:

REGISTER OF GIFTS / HOSPITALITY / AWARDS ETC

Date of Event or Gift Offered	Offered to	Ultimate recipient (if different)	Offered From	Description of Offer	Reason for Offer	Details of Contracts - current or potential	Est. / actual value of offer £	Action Taken i.e. Accepted / Declined / Returned	Entered by	Entered Date	File Ref:

ANNEX 3 – GUIDANCE FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY OFFERED TO US

Hospitality offered	Appropriate to accept	Prior approval required*	Further action necessary
Modest conventional hospitality (e.g., working lunch)	Yes	No	None Note that if the lunches become a regular occurrence, these should be recorded on the register.
More formal lunch or dinner, by prior invitation	Yes, subject to approval	For staff up to Grade 7/6, prior approval required from Grade 5 line manager. For SCS no prior approval required.	Record in "Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us". A check should be made in advance to ensure that the department will not be over-represented at the function concerned.
Hospitality offered to a team	Yes, subject to approval	Prior approval required at Grade 5 or above.	Record in "Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us".
Commemorative event or trade promotion organised by contractor, consultant or supplier with a meal.	Yes, subject to approval	For staff up to Grade 7/6, prior approval required from Grade 5 line manager. For SCS no prior approval required.	Record in "Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us".
Trade promotion on company's premises with meals or drinks	Yes, subject to approval	For staff up to Grade 7/6, prior approval required from Grade 5 line manager. For SCS no prior approval required.	Record in "Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us".

Hospitality offered	Appropriate to accept	Prior approval required*	Further action necessary
Annual dinner of Professional Institution or Association: (a) where the officer is a guest of the Institution or Association; or (b) where the officer is a guest of a particular consultant, contractor or supplier.	Yes, subject to approval	For staff up to Grade 7/6, prior approval required from Grade 5 line manager. For SCS no prior approval required.	Record in "Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us".
Cultural or sporting events as a guest.	No	Not applicable.	Should be refused or returned. Record in "Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us".
Overseas visit to inspect manufacturers' products / premises.	Yes, subject to approval	Prior approval required for all grades; approval to be obtained from Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change or the Director; approval will only be granted exceptionally.	Record in "Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us". If approval is given, travel and accommodation will be paid by the department. Acceptance of modest hospitality (e.g. working lunches) is permissible.

Hospitality offered	Appropriate to accept	Prior approval required*	Further action necessary
Occasional seasonal or modest gifts (e.g., company calendars, diaries or inexpensive pens or stationery sets). which bear Company names and/or logos of the provider of the gift and have a value of less than £50.	Yes	No	None
Gifts presented by an organisation which do not have a logo but which do not exceed £50 in value.	Yes, subject to approval	For staff up to Grade 7/6, prior approval required from Grade 5 line manager. For SCS, prior approval required obtained from Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change or the Director	Record in "Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us".
Expensive gifts – value more than £50 including gifts of lottery, tickets, cash, gift vouchers or gift cheques.	No	Not applicable	Should be refused or returned. Record in "Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us".
Gifts of alcohol from any source, including a contractor, or where a contractor relationship is being contemplated.	No	Not applicable	Should be refused or returned. Record in "Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us".

Hospitality offered	Appropriate to accept	Prior approval required*	Further action necessary
Trade, loyalty, discount cards or air miles by which an officer might <u>personally</u> benefit from the purchase of goods or services at a reduced price.	No	Not applicable	Should be refused or returned. Record in "Register of Gifts and Hospitality Offered To Us".

* Where approval is required, please complete the form at Annex 4.

ANNEX 4 – APPROVAL FORM FOR ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY OFFERED TO US

(Part 1 to be completed by recipient – part 2 overleaf to be completed by approving officer)

GIFT/HOSPITALITY FORM A1 (Part 1) DETAILS	
Offered to:	
Name of ultimate recipient if not as above (i.e. if gift or hospitality passed on to someone else):	
Date of event or gift offered:	
Who made the offer:	
Description of offer:	
Why was the offer made:	
Estimated/actual value of offer:	
State whether offer was declined:	
Is there a current/potential contract with the donor? If yes provide details:	
Signature:	Signed: Date:

PLEASE TURN OVER FOR PART 2 TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPROVING OFFICER

GIFT/HOSPITALITY FORM A1 (Part 2) OUTCOME	
Decision: (Approved/Not Approved)	
Reasons why approval has/has not been granted:	
Is gift being returned? If so, a letter should be issued (template at Annex 5 to be used)	
Has the gift been used or disposed of? If so give details:	
Has the gift been donated to a nominated charity?	
Has the Gifts and Hospitality register been updated?	
Signature of Approving Officer (not below Grade 5):	Signed: Date:

NB: FORM NOT VALID UNLESS BOTH PARTS 1 AND 2 HAVE BEEN COMPLETED

ANNEX 5 – TEMPLATE FOR 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	
<p>The Public Prosecution Service, as a publicly funded body, operates a Gift and Hospitality Policy to ensure high standards of propriety in the conduct of its business.</p> <p>On account of public confidence, perception is as important as reality and because of this I am obliged to return your offer of <u>INSERT: <i>Name of gift / hospitality</i></u>.</p> <p>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 Public Prosecution Service generally. I hope you will accept our response in that spirit and that we can look forward to continued effective working relationships.</p> <p>Yours</p>	

ANNEX 6 – APPROVAL FORM FOR HOSPITALITY > £100

PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE	
APPROVAL FORM FOR HOSPITALITY COSTING MORE THAN £100	
Division/Branch:	
Name of person requesting approval:	
Telephone number / extension:	
Date request submitted:	
Type of function i.e. General Hospitality, Conference catering, official visitors – hospitality costs.	
Cost Centre to be charged – code and description:	
Date of function:	
Time of function:	From: To:
Venue/location of function:	
Total number of people attending:	
Number of external visitors and employing organisation(s) – see Note 3 below:	
Nature of hospitality to be provided:	
Reason for expenditure i.e. what is the purpose of the event and what are the expected benefits to the PPS:	
Total estimated cost – see attached sheet	
Approved by Grade 5 or above (for expenditure between £100 - £299)	
Date	
Approved by Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change or Accounting Officer (for expenditure £300 or greater)	
Date	

PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE	
BREAKDOWN OF COSTS FOR HOSPITALITY COSTING MORE THAN £100	
Division/Branch:	
Name of person requesting approval:	
ITEM	£
ROOM HIRE	
HOTEL AND ACCOMMODATION COSTS	
FOOD	
BEVERAGES	
ALCOHOL	
EVENT MANAGEMENT	
TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE	
PRINTING AND STATIONERY	
GIFTS	
OTHER – PLEASE SPECIFY	
TOTAL	

- 1 - Further information should be provided on additional schedules if it is considered necessary for the full and proper understanding of the request;
- 2 - This form should be retained by the business unit organising the event for the purposes of subsequent audit inspection;
- 3 - Names of individuals or organisations may be omitted if essential for security reasons – a statement to this effect should be entered instead.

ANNEX 7 – GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY PROVIDED – PRIOR APPROVAL LIMITS

Prior approval must be sought from DFP for all gifts in excess of £100.

Prior approval must be sought from the Senior Assistant Director, Resources and Change in the following circumstances before incurring expenditure:

1. **Official hospitality / events** – this includes situations where:
 - the estimated cost for the function is greater than £300;
 - the number of PPS official exceeds the number of guests; or
 - spouses, partners or other associates of PPS officials are to be invited.
2. **Value for money** – where the proposed expenditure exceeds the recommended levels contained within the guidance, e.g., £4.25 per head for management hospitality.
3. **Gifts** – where the cost of the proposed gift exceeds £50 per individual.
4. If there is any **doubt** about the application of this guidance, **flexibility** in interpretation of the strict rules may be necessary or where it involves situations which are **not covered** by the existing guidelines.

ANNEX 8 – RELATED DOCUMENTS / GOVERNMENT PRINCIPLES

DAO (DFP) 10/06 Acceptance and Provision of Gifts and Hospitality –
http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/finance/afmd/afmd-key-guidance/afmd-daos/daodfp1006_revised_sept_09-2.pdf

DAO (DFP) 06/12 Departmental delegations / requirements for DFP approval –
<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/index/finance/afmd/afmd-key-guidance/afmd-daos/daodfp0612v2.pdf>

NICS HR Handbook Section 6.01 Standards of Conduct – Acceptance of Gifts, Hospitality and Rewards
https://portal.hrconnect.nigov.net/portal/page/portal/NICS_PG/nics_hrhandbook/Policies/6.%20Employee%20Relations/6.01%20Standards%20of%20Conduct/10%20%20Acceptance%20of%20Gifts

Regularity, Propriety and Value for Money, Treasury Officer of Accounts (Nov 2004)

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130129110402/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/psr_governance_valueformoney.htm;

The NICS Code of Ethics –

<http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/6.01-standards-of-conduct.pdf>

The PPS Anti-Fraud Policy and Fraud Response Plan
www.ppsni.gov.uk