



**Lancashire
Constabulary**
police and communities together

REPORT TO: JOINT AUDIT AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

DATE: 11th September 2017

SUBJECT: Lancashire Constabulary - Update on Gifts and Gratuities

Appendix A refers

1. Issue for consideration

Publication data – Lancashire Constabulary gifts and gratuities

2. Information

The current Gifts and Gratuities Policy was last reviewed in June 2016.

National headlines concerning issues of integrity within the Police Service continue to receive high levels of public interest. They highlight the significant reputational risk that such issues can have for forces. In some cases this has resulted in detailed scrutiny of existing force arrangements, both by media organisations and by relevant audit and inspection bodies.

The recommendations that came out of historic reviews prompted the publication of a set of national standards for the recording and monitoring of gifts, gratuities and hospitality. The document is called the “ACPO Guidelines on Gifts, Gratuities and Hospitality (2012)”.

The acceptance of gifts, gratuities and hospitality can undermine personal and professional integrity and can in turn undermine public confidence in the police service. As a result, the Constabulary has reviewed its own guidelines for the acceptance of gifts, gratuities and hospitality from members of the public, businesses and from corporate bodies.

There is recognition that offers of a gift, gratuity or hospitality vary widely according to the circumstances, ranging from readily identifiable examples of criminality (such as a breach of the Bribery Act 2010) through to instances of entirely appropriate and reasonable extension of gratitude and common courtesy, which do not amount to the breach of integrity of any party.

Process

All staff irrespective of role, rank or circumstance are asked to consider the following mnemonic (**GIFT**) when accepting gifts or gratuities:

Genuine:

Is the offer made for reasons of genuine appreciation for something that you have done in the course of your duties or role?

Consider why this offer is being made and the circumstances in which it is done so.

Have you encouraged this offer in any way?

Is it possible that the donor feels in any way obliged to make this offer?

Independent:

Would the offer or acceptance of the gift be seen as reasonable to a member of the public?

Would they be confident that you would remain impartial in your duties or role?

Free:

Are you comfortable with the offer?

Do you feel free from any obligation to do something in return?

What are the donor's expectations should you accept?

Transparent:

Are you comfortable that the acceptance of this offer of a gift or hospitality would stand scrutiny by the Constabulary, your colleagues or the public if it was reported publicly?

What could be the outcome for you and the Constabulary if the offer was accepted or declined?

All offers of gifts, gratuities or hospitality, irrespective of whether they are accepted or rejected by the recipient, will be recorded in a single corporate register.

The Gifts and Gratuities system is accessed via the force intranet. The system presents users with a template that asks specific questions relating to the nature of the gift, the reason for it being offered, the person or organization making the offer and the subsequent disposal of it. The data from the submission template is automatically uploaded to a central database hosted on the Force Sharepoint site.

The system owner of the Gifts and Gratuities Register and associated processes is the Head of Professional Standards.

On a monthly basis the Head of PSD reviews **all submissions** to the Gifts and Gratuities Register to ensure that a consistent level of scrutiny and governance is applied and that where necessary individuals are challenged or held to account for the acceptance of offers. This process is also used to identify any recurring recipients or donors and also to identify any offers that may indicate a motive other than a legitimate and unsolicited appreciation for services provided.

In line with the Force Publication Scheme, the Gifts and Gratuities offered to members of the Constabulary are posted on the Force internet site for public information. The data is redacted to remove any personal information and provides various breakdowns of the information recorded on the Register.

Analysis

There is an expectation that similar numbers of gifts would be recorded for the different policing areas within the force but the data would suggest this is not the case and would indicate that there is a degree of under recording in some areas.

Year on year the total number of gifts recorded has increased from 159 (15/16) to 195 (16/17).

Anecdotally we know that promotional activity on the part of PSD to advise staff of their duty to record offers of gifts does result in a short term increase in recording and again an indication that not all offers are being recorded as they should.

The bulk of gifts are divided into two distinct groups, namely those offered to staff who hold position of authority or who are key representatives of the force and those who are regularly engaged in face to face contact with members of the public.

The recent introduction of the option to record offers as “Re-gifted” has helped resolved the dilemma faced by some staff who have found it difficult to politely or sensitively refuse gifts in circumstances where it might not normally be appropriate to do so.

The larger value gifts tend to relate to services or hospitality as opposed to the offer of a tangible item.

A large proportion of gifts received by Chief Officers are corporate invitations to attend functions in their capacity as a senior representative of the organization and although recorded are not personal gifts. These are scrutinised as per the Gateway Policy by both the Staff officer to the Chief Constable and the Head of PSD.

3. Decision required

The committee is asked to note the report

4. Background papers

None

5. Report author

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