

West Midlands Fire and Civil Defence Authority

Protocol For Members on Gifts and Hospitality

1. This protocol is intended to provide guidance for Members who receive offers of gifts or hospitality in connection with their official duties as Members of the Authority. It is intended to supplement the relevant provisions of the Authority's Code of Conduct for Members, which was adopted by the Authority with effect from 1st May, 2002.
2. The attention of Members is particularly drawn to the following paragraphs of the Code of Conduct:-
 - "4. A Member must not in his official capacity, or any other circumstance, conduct himself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing his office or authority into disrepute", and
 - "16. A Member must within 28 days of receiving any gift or hospitality over the value of £25.00 provide written notification to the authority's Monitoring Officer of the existence and nature of that gift or hospitality".
2. Members should take reasonable action to discourage offers of gifts and hospitality in connection with their duties as a member of the Authority. Members should treat with extreme caution any offer or gift, favour or hospitality, which is made to them personally (whether or not the value of such offer, gift, favour or hospitality exceeds £25.00). The person or organisation making the offer may be doing, or seeking to do, business with the Authority or may be applying to the Authority for funding or some other kind of decision.
3. There are no hard or fast rules about the acceptance or refusal of hospitality or tokens of good will. For example, working lunches may be a proper way of doing business, provided that no extravagance is involved; likewise, it may be reasonable for a Member to represent the Authority at a social function or event organised by outside persons or bodies.
4. Each Member is personally responsible for all decisions connected with the acceptance or offer of gifts or hospitality and for avoiding the risk of damage to the public confidence in local government.
5. **A Member must within 28 days of receiving any gift or hospitality over the value of £25.00 relating to or arising out of his/her position as a Member of the Authority, provide written notification to the Authority's Monitoring Officer of the existence and nature of that gift or hospitality.**

6. A Member must also notify the Authority's Monitoring Officer of any offer of any gift or hospitality, whether or not the Member accepts that offer, which exceeds the value of £25.00 or which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts might reasonably regard as intended to influence his/her discharge of his/her responsibilities as a Member of the Authority.
7. Such notification shall be made as soon as reasonably practicable after the Member is aware of the offer and in any case within 28 days of such offer having been received.
8. For the purposes of this protocol, "gift or hospitality" includes any opportunity to acquire goods or services at a price or on terms at which they are not readily available to the general public.
9. Attached to this protocol is a form for the registration of offers/refusals/acceptance of gifts or hospitality. Further copies can be obtained from the Authority's Monitoring Officer. The forms should be completed in accordance with the provisions of this protocol and returned to the Monitoring Officer for registration.
10. The provisions set out in paragraph 5 of this protocol are contained in the Authority's Code of Conduct for Members. Breach of those provisions, therefore, constitutes a breach of the Code of Conduct, which may be reported to the Standards Board for England. A breach of any of the other provisions of this protocol would normally be the subject of a report to the Authority's Standards Committee.