

**Down District Council Policy Regarding the
Acceptance of Gifts and Hospitality.**



Acceptance of Gifts & Hospitality

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Down District Council - Local Register of Gifts and Hospitality

All members, when they take their declaration of office, undertake to be guided by part 24 of The Northern Ireland Code of Local Government Conduct.

All staff when accepting employment by Down District Council agree to abide by the Council's Code of Conduct.

The object of the local scheme is to ensure greater transparency about receipt of gifts and hospitality. The local scheme goes further than the existing Codes in that it requires declaration of all gifts and hospitality beyond the trivial. The scheme will apply to all Down District Council members and employees.

The Register

1. If you are offered gifts or hospitality, and you think that the offer has been made because you are a Councillor or an employee of Council you should complete the register which will be held by the Director of Corporate Services and will be available for public inspection. (Outline of Register details at Appendix 1.)
2. You do not need to make an entry in the register if you were offered gifts/hospitality but refused the offer. If you wish to, you may.
3. You do not need to declare trivial gifts or hospitality in the Register; e.g. tea and biscuits at a meeting, or the gift of a calendar. Anything more substantial should be declared.
4. Not all gifts and hospitality will be offered to you because you are a Councillor or Council employee. You may be offered gifts or hospitality by a friend, by your college, by business contacts etc. If, in your judgment, the offer of a gift or hospitality is prompted by something other than your status as a Councillor or Council employee, you do not need to declare it in the hospitality register. However, you may well need to declare the relationship and/or such gifts or hospitality at a meeting as a "Code of Conduct" interest if they are relevant to an item under consideration.
5. Gifts and hospitality offered to the Chairman in his/her capacity as Chairman do not have to be declared in the Hospitality Register, although they may still need to be declared as "Code of Conduct" interests at meetings.

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6. Where hospitality is made available to a group of Councillors or Council employees as part of an event or visit in which the Council is participating, the Head of Corporate Services may make a block entry in the Register for members affected and will tell the members / employees in question that he has done so.

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7. You should be very cautious about accepting gifts and hospitality which you think may have been offered because you are a Councillor or Council employee. Generally, anything other than modest promotional gifts (diaries, calendars etc) or modest hospitality (eg light refreshments at a meeting) should be refused. Special care should be taken where someone has, or may in the future have, dealings with the Council.
8. If refusal of a gift might cause embarrassment, an appropriate alternative to refusal might be to donate the gift to the Chairman's Charity for raffle or auction.

Further Guidance

If you need further guidance at any time about the Register or about whether to accept gifts of hospitality, please contact the Director of Corporate Services Down District Council.

Equality Impact Assessment

This Policy has been assessed under Down District Council's Equality Impact Assessment process and has been screened out as having no impact on any of the groups designated in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

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Appendix 1.

The Register for Gifts and Hospitality titled " Register of Gifts etc Received" will contain the following details.

COUNCILLOR / EMPLOYEE NAME	GIFT / HOSPITALITY	RECEIVED FROM	DATE