

Gifts & hospitality

Gifts policy

It is Ofcom policy not to provide gifts or to accept them from individuals or organisations.

Under no circumstances should gifts be accepted:

- From the organisations we regulate;
- By colleagues in the Commercial Team;
- By colleagues involved in any tender/procurement exercise;
- By colleagues involved in a licence awards process; and
- By colleagues involved in putting into practice/discussing policy or making a decision which might affect the individual or organisation concerned.

Outside of the examples given above, we recognise that there can be situations where an individual or organisation will insist on making a gift. Gifts of less than £10 in value, such as pens and mugs etc. do not require declaration and may be accepted and kept by the colleague.

Gifts with a retail value of more than £10 must be declared and recorded on the Gifts and Hospitality Register. Gifts of this value are not to be retained by colleagues; once declared on the register the gift should be passed to the Internal Comms Team who will arrange for it to be donated to charity.

Hospitality policy

There is a presumption against accepting offers of hospitality from those organisations that Ofcom regulates. Ofcom must always be seen as an unbiased and independent regulator. If colleagues are unsure whether to make or accept an invitation, they must obtain guidance from the relevant Senior Management Specialist member or the Corporation Secretary. The burden falls to the colleague to explain why an offer of hospitality should be accepted.

Colleagues should consider the following broad guidelines which may be of help in assessing the relative merits of accepting an invitation:

- Category 1:** Event-based hospitality that presents networking opportunities with Ofcom's stakeholders, and which might therefore inform or promote the work of Ofcom, may be acceptable. An example would be attendance at an industry awards dinner.
- Category 2:** Work-related hospitality from a single stakeholder or licensee is acceptable where it can clearly be seen to be of value to Ofcom's work and to the wider industry in question. A working lunch may be an example.
- Category 3:** Hospitality that benefits the recipient personally should be politely declined if it is difficult to justify the benefit to Ofcom, or if there is a risk of perceived bias or malign comment. An example would include invitations by Ofcom stakeholders to cultural or sporting events, such as the offer of tickets to the BBC Proms, or to the FA Cup final, or to a concert at the O2 Arena.

Register of Gifts and Hospitality

Ofcom keeps a [publicly available Register of Gifts and Hospitality](#) into which, for purposes of accountability and consistency, all relevant hospitality received or given by Board Members and members of the Senior Management Team should be logged.