

In your reflective activity, you should have covered all of these points:

- By thanking Mrs McTaggart and explaining that you cannot accept gifts, you did the right thing.
- When a person who uses your service wants to give you a gift you might worry that refusing will hurt their feelings. However, it is possible to acknowledge the kind thought and politely refuse to accept the gift.
- You know that your employer has a policy on accepting gifts from people who use services. While some employers may allow you to accept a small token gift such as a knitted scarf, or a thank you card, accepting high value items is unlikely to be allowed.
- If you were unsure how to respond to Mrs McTaggart's offer without causing offence, you could explain there are rules about accepting gifts, which are there to protect both service users and staff.
- You have a clear understanding and good awareness of professional boundaries and how to maintain these. These boundaries are in place to protect residents and to protect you. Becoming more of a friend to a resident makes it difficult for you to continue to have a professional relationship.
- Your decision making shows you have a good understanding of the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers, which says that you should be honest and trustworthy. The Code also says that you should comply with your employer's policies on accepting gifts, which you have done.
- You understand that accepting high value gifts from people who use services may call into question your honesty and professional boundaries. Guidance on accepting gifts is there to protect people who use services and to protect you from accusations of exploiting vulnerable people for financial gain or of giving favourable treatment to some people who use services in return for gifts.
- People who use services may offer gifts for all kinds of reasons and some of these are not positive. Gifts are often offered out of gratitude, or sometimes because a person who uses your service feels guilty for being a burden. Others may believe that they will become more important to you and get preferential treatment. It is often difficult to know and it is essential that you stick to policies on accepting gifts.
- If your colleagues discovered that you accepted a high value gift from a person who uses your service, they might think this is not the only time this has happened. They could think that you give some people who use services more favourable treatment in return for gifts. This would damage the effectiveness of the team. The SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers says that effective teams are built on trust, respect and open communication.