

Here are some points that you need to consider. You should have included all of these in your reflective activity.

- You now realise you have made a mistake and that you should have told your employer about the gift. Your next step is to speak to your supervisor and work together to find a solution.
- Now a colleague has discovered you accepted this gift, she (and others) might think you have accepted other gifts in the past. By not mentioning it yourself, it could look as though you have something to hide.
- Your colleague may also wonder whether you give some people who use services more favourable treatment in return for gifts.
- You should communicate more openly with your colleagues in future. The SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers says that the effectiveness of a team is built on trust, respect and open communication.
- You have shown you do not know your employer's policy on accepting gifts, which is there to protect both staff and people who use services. You should read this policy.
- Your decision making shows that you should look again at 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.
- You should have a better 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.
- By accepting the gift and not declaring it, you are not meeting the standards expected of a social service worker. You should speak to your supervisor about what has happened.

When Mrs McTaggart offered to buy you the earrings the best thing to do would have been to politely explain that you cannot accept gifts.