

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

- You have realised that you made a mistake. Declaring the gift and offering to return it is the right thing to do now.
- Your supervisor might wonder whether you have accepted other gifts in the past. By not mentioning this gift earlier, it could look as though you have something to hide.
- Your supervisor might suspect you give some people who use services more favourable treatment in return for gifts.
- You had forgotten your employer's policy on accepting gifts, which is there to protect both staff and people who use services. You should read this policy again.
- 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.
- Your decision making shows that you should look again at the SSSC Code of Practice for Social Service Workers, which says that you must be honest and trustworthy. The Code also says that you must 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.
- You are now doing the right thing, but you must speak to your supervisor about what has happened. Your supervisor will help you to put things right and to make sure you meet the standards expected of a social service worker.

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.