

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

- You have not yet realised that accepting the earrings was a mistake. The meeting with your supervisor was an opportunity to have an honest discussion and offer to return the gift, which would have been the best thing to do.
- By finding out you accepted a high value gift from a person who uses your service, both Mrs McTaggart's family and your supervisor might wonder whether you have accepted other gifts in the past. By not mentioning it earlier and asking Mrs McTaggart to keep it quiet, it looks as though you have something to hide. The family might ask for an investigation.
- 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 should read your employer's policy on accepting gifts. It is your responsibility to know your employer's policies and to act on them. Policies on accepting gifts are there to protect both staff and people who use services.
- 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.
- When you accepted the gift and did not declare it, you were not meeting the standards expected of a social service worker. You should speak to your supervisor about what has happened. Your supervisor will help you to put things right.

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.