

SCENARIO

GIFTS AND BENEFITS

Recruitment: it's all in the family

Susan works in the Human Resources section of a large Government Business Enterprise. She is regularly involved in the recruitment of new staff.

While coordinating the recruitment process for a trainee, Susan is approached by Stephen, a senior manager in another section. He tells Susan that his granddaughter has applied for the traineeship. He says that she is a 'great kid' even though she's had a number of 'near misses with the police' and all she needs is for someone to 'give her a break.'

A few days later, just before the candidates are shortlisted for interview, Susan arrives at work to find an expensive bottle of wine in her office. The note with it reads: 'Thanks for your understanding and help with this one, Stephen.'

What are the ethical issues in this situation?

- Gifts and benefits.
- Conflict of interest.
- Inappropriate use of power and authority.

How should Susan deal with this situation?

- Advise Stephen that the shortlisting and appointment will be decided by a panel and that the decision will be made on the merit evident in the applications.
- Politely return the bottle of wine to Stephen, as it is not a legitimate gift. Keeping and disclosing the gift would not be an option.
- Advise the other panel members, and her line manager, of Stephen's approach to her.
- Declare the offer on the public authority's gifts and benefits register.



What factors need to be taken into consideration in this situation?

- Susan has not solicited the gift.
- Acceptance of the wine could be seen to undermine the integrity of the selection process.
- It can be difficult to avoid and handle an unsolicited approach, but it must still be actively managed.

What strategies could be implemented to avoid this situation in the future?

All employees, including managers, should be made aware of the public authority's:

- code of conduct;
- recruitment policies and procedures; and
- gifts and benefits and conflict of interest policies.

Information used in this scenario is not based in fact, but has been created for the purpose of education and discussion. Any likeness to real persons or events is coincidental.