Gift Policy

1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

1.1 The Voluntary Network recognises that people often feel grateful for the help that they have received and may wish to show their appreciation in a tangible way, through a present or a gift of money. Whilst The Voluntary Network recognises that people take pleasure in giving presents, to accept such gifts could imply that The Voluntary Network's employees and/or volunteers expect payment beyond that given by the organisation through salaries and/or expenses. Employees must therefore follow the rules as set out in section 3 below in order to reduce the risk of being accused of extortion, bribery or theft.

1.2 This policy applies to all Employees, Volunteers and Trustees of The Voluntary Network. For the purpose of this document, Employees, Volunteers and Trustees are referred to collectively as 'Employees'.

1.3 For the purpose of this policy Managers refers to the Manager and Volunteer Co-ordinator.

1.4 Managers are responsible for ensuring the Gifts policy is discussed with employees at induction and that reminders are provided regularly through team meetings and supervision.

2 PURPOSE

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

i) Protect employees from potential claims of bribery, extortion, theft and/or financial abuse.
ii) Protect The Voluntary Network service users from potential abuse.
iii) Raise awareness amongst employees of the rules relating to gifts from individuals or organisations.

3. RULES

3.1 It is forbidden, regardless of the circumstances, for an employee to:

3.1.1 Accept money of any value.
3.1.2 Accept gifts from, or given on behalf of, someone using The Voluntary Network services, (other than that explained in paragraph 3.2 below) or from a representative of another organisation.
3.1.3 Accept money in the form of a loan.
3.1.4 Solicit money, gifts or personal possessions from a service user by direct request or suggestion. Employees must not express a liking for a particular item on sale or a possession belonging to the service user too

frequently or earnestly, or talk excessively about their financial problems, as this may lead to the service user feeling pressured into purchasing items, giving gifts, paying bills or offering loans to the employee and/or may imply to the service user that the employee wants to be left a particular possession.

3.1.5 Encourage a service user to make them a bequest in their will or ask a member of their family or friends to do so. If an employee becomes aware that a bequest has been made to them, even if they have not encouraged it, then the employee must inform their line manager immediately and will be required to return the bequest.

3.1.6 Accept personal gifts from salespeople, agencies or other individuals working with or supplying services to the organisation.

3.2 The only exception to 3.1.2 above is the giving of small token gifts on special occasions (e.g. at Christmas) or to say thank you when an employee has shown particular kindness. For the purpose of this policy, token gifts are small items between the value of £5 and £10 (e.g. flowers). If a token gift is given and accepted, the line manager must be informed in order to protect the recipient against any later misunderstandings. This exception does not apply to the acceptance of token gifts under 3.1.6.

3.3 In declining gifts and offers of money the employee must do this politely and sensitively so as not to cause upset or offence. Where refusal is questioned or where this does cause offence or distress to the giver, the employee should thank the giver sincerely for their kind offer but then gently suggest that if they want to show their appreciation they might like to make a small donation to the work of The Voluntary Network instead. Any such donation received must be sent directly to the line manager so that a letter of acknowledgement and thanks can be sent promptly to the person making the donation.

3.4 If an employee has any queries or concerns about the giving and accepting of gifts, these should be discussed with their line manager or other senior manager.

3.5 It is very important for line managers to be informed whenever a gift is offered to an employee. This is necessary to ensure The Voluntary Network can appropriately represent the employee if the organisation is subsequently contacted about the gift by the service user directly or their relatives or legal representatives.

3.6 Employees are advised not to give personal gifts to service users as this action may be misconstrued by the person or a member of their family.

3.7 Any breach of the terms of this policy will be considered gross misconduct and disciplinary action will be taken.