

Use of Purchasing Cards

In view of the current financial position of the Trust a review has been undertaken on the use of purchasing cards. Compared to other NHS organisations ELFT has a large number of cards in operation, and spends a significant amount on these on a monthly basis, it is important that controls are introduced in this area to reduce inappropriate spend.

Cardholders are reminded of the following key principles within the Purchasing Card Policy:

- Cards should only be used for buying goods and services required ultimately for meeting the needs of service users.
- Corporate cards must not be used as a means of avoiding the Trust official Procurement systems or compliance to normal purchasing regulations.
- Card holders should never disclose the credit card number, security code or PIN
- Purchasing cards should not be used: -
 - to pay for travel or accommodation
 - to purchase IT or telecoms equipment
 - to purchase other electrical equipment
 - to purchase items listed as prohibited in the petty cash policy such as tobacco, alcohol, parking costs, petrol.

The following specific issues are to be noted by all cardholders: -

- Awaydays should be planned sufficiently in advance so that spend can be routed via SBS where possible, this will help to ensure value for money. If, on rare occasions, catering cannot be purchased via SBS then a maximum spend of £7.50 per head will be allowed and must be approved by the Service/Corporate Director.

The above is for awaydays only, a distinction needs to be drawn between an awayday and standard team meetings.

- The provision of refreshments for team meetings should not be routinely provided as it is not an appropriate use of NHS funds. Tea and coffee is provided by the Trust across all sites.
- Restrictions will be introduced for the amount to be spent per person on taking individuals out and the amounts service user groups receive for refreshments.
- All spend on training and conferences must first be approved by the Service/Corporate Director. Attendance at events/conferences overseas should require approval from the Chief People Officer and Chief Financial Officer.
- Those cardholders who regularly use Amazon for purchases are asked to contact the procurement team to discuss potential use of the corporate account.

- Spend on furniture must be routed via the procurement team and SBS.
- All spend on flowers should be stopped with discretion applied by Service/Corporate Directors and the Chief Nurse in exceptional circumstances.
- Giftcards should only be purchased for winners of the employee/team of the month.
- Services should submit applications for funding from the Charity to support events such as Christmas, Eid, Pride, summer barbeques etc, as a result spend on purchasing cards should not occur.

Breaches of the policy and the above requirements will be reported to Service/Corporate Directors, if there continue to be issues then cards will be cancelled.

Over the next few week Service/Corporate Directors will be asked to review the list of cardholders for their areas with a view to reducing this to minimum levels. News cards will only be issued to reflect staff moves. The limits on cards can be amended as required to reflect the increased spend on certain cards, this will be considered on a case by case basis.