



# Conflict of Interest Policy

**An example of what a policy might look like. Of course, if your organisation is drafting together a policy you will have to make the appropriate amendments and changes.**

## Overview

Trustees, staff and volunteers of ..... have a general duty to act in the best interests of ..... and, as ambassadors for the organisation, to promote ..... They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefit for themselves, their family, their friends, their business connections, or the organisation they come from or represent. They should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to external individuals or organisations which might seek to influence them in the performance of their role.

## Declarations of interest

It is recognised that, in a member-run organisation, there may be times when the interests of the organisation from which a Trustee comes, are in conflict with the interests of ..... Trustees of ..... have a duty to declare any interests relating to their trustee role and to take steps to resolve any conflicts which may arise, Where private interests of a trustee conflict with their trustee duties, they must resolve the conflict in favour of the trustee role.

On seeking to become a trustee, and on being elected, trustees must make relevant declarations of interest in the different circumstances and roles they play both within and outside ..... Should any potential conflicts arise during the trustee's time in office, this should again be declared. Any declarations of interest should be recorded by the Chair. All declarations of interest should be made at Trustee Board meetings.

## Financial Interests

Trustees of ..... should not have any personal financial interests in conflict with those of ....., either in person or through family or business connections, nor any financial interest in a matter under discussion. Where such interests exist or may exist, the trustee is required to declare a conflict of interest by specifically notifying any such interest at any meeting where trustees are required to make a decision which affects or may affect their personal interest and by absenting themselves entirely from such decision-making/voting—usually by leaving the room, but always by taking no part in the discussion and/or vote.

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Any ..... Trustee who stands to gain, however innocently, from a decision of the Trustee Board or who finds that there is or may be any conflict between her/his duty to ..... and his/her personal interests, should disclose this and take no part in the decision. If the conflict is sufficiently serious or is likely to be prolonged, the trustee concerned may have to avoid attending Trustee Board meetings while the issue is resolved, or even resign her/his trusteeship.

## Duality of Interest

It is recognised that conflicts can also arise between a trustee's duty to ..... and some other public obligation, trusteeship of another organisation or membership/employment by another organisation. This is defined as duality of interest; that is, the trustee may have divided loyalties, but does not stand to gain financially. Where such duality exists, the trustee should declare it, and is expected to act in the best interests of ..... If the trustee is appointed by, represents, or is a member of another body, s/he must remember that his/her duty to ..... still overrides all other obligations; if irreconcilable conflict arises, again s/he may have to avoid taking any part in decisions of the Trustee Board, or may have to resign from one or other position.

## Situations Where Interest May Be Unclear

If a trustee has an interest which does not, in the opinion of a clear majority of the rest of the trustees present at a meeting, create a real danger of bias but which might cause others to think that it could influence their decision, the trustee would still declare the nature of the interest, but may remain in the room and take part in the discussion and vote if s/he and other trustees feel this to be appropriate. It is recognised that there may be occasions on which correct procedure is harder to identify, and then trustees must remember their overriding duty to avoid conflict of interest and to act not in their own interest, but in the interest of ..... as a whole and all its present and future beneficiaries.

If there is any doubt about any aspect of the Policy, trustees should consult the Chair at the earliest opportunity. If the Chair is unclear, advice should be taken from the Charity Commission.

## Recording of Interest

All declarations of dual interest or conflict of interest—real or potential—must be recorded in the minutes of Trustee Board meetings.

