

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire Conflicts of Interest Policy

This policy applies equally to Board Members, Staff and Volunteers

Why have a policy?

The people who work and volunteer for Healthwatch Cambridgeshire (HWC) have an obligation to act in the best interests of organisation and in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles and the organisation's policies. Conflicts of interests may arise where an individual's business, personal or family interests and/or loyalties conflict with those of organisation.

Such conflicts may create problems; they can:

- Inhibit free discussion
- Result in decisions or actions that are not in the interests of the organisation
- Risk the impression that the organisation has acted improperly

The aim of this policy is to protect both the organisation and the individuals involved from any appearance of impropriety.

The declaration of interests

We are asking the Chair, the Non-Executive Directors and the Chief Executive to declare their interests, and any gifts or hospitality received in connection with their role. A declaration of interests form is provided for this purpose, listing the types of interest you should declare.

To be effective, the declaration of interests needs to be updated at least annually, and also when any changes occur.

If you are not sure what to declare, or whether/when your declaration needs to be updated, please err on the side of caution. If you would like to discuss this issue, please contact the Chief Executive for confidential guidance. Interests will be recorded on the register of interests, which will be maintained by the Chief Executive. The register will be accessible by the people who are asked to declare their interests.

Data Protection

The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998. Data will be processed only to ensure that Trustees and senior staff act in the best interests of organisation. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

What to do if you face a conflict of interest

Interested Board members may not vote on matters affecting their own interests or those of a member of staff with whom they have a close relationship (such as when the member of staff is a relative or partner). They must absent themselves from the discussion or may participate in the discussion but not the decision-making process at the discretion of the Chair.

If you fail to declare an interest that is known to the Chair, the Chair will declare that interest.

Staff should not be involved in Board decisions that directly affect the service that you, or any person you care for, receive(s). You should declare your interest at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from any subsequent discussion. The same applies if you face a conflict for any other reason. You may, however, participate in discussions from which you may indirectly benefit, for example where the benefits are universal to all users, or where your benefit is minimal.

Managing contracts

If you have a conflict of interest, you must not be involved in managing or monitoring a contract in which you have an interest. Monitoring arrangements for such contracts will include provisions for an independent challenge of bills and invoices, and termination of the contract if the relationship is unsatisfactory.

Approved by Healthwatch Cambridgeshire Board of Directors

Date: 13 November 2013

Reviewed

Date: January 2016

Next Review

Date: January 2017

Responsible Officer

Chief Executive Officer of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire