

Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Conflicts of Interest Policy

Purpose of this policy

The people who work and volunteer for Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have an obligation to act in the best interests of the organisation and in accordance with organisation's Memorandum and Articles and the 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

The Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Chair, Directors and Chief Executive Officer declare their interests and any gifts or hospitality received in connection with their role on the organisation's declaration of interests form which is provided for this purpose. The types of interest to be declared are listed.

The Declarations of Interests Register is updated annually and also when any changes occur.

When in doubt as to whether a declaration needs to be updated, err on the side of caution. The Chief Executive Officer and the Chair are able to offer confidential guidance. Interests will be recorded on the register of interests, which will be maintained by the Chief Executive. The register will be publicly available on the organisation's websites.

Data Protection

The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Data Protection Policy. Data will be processed only to ensure that all staff and volunteers act in the best interests of the organisation. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

What to do when there is a conflict of interest

Directors

Conflicted Directors may not vote on matters affecting their own and their close family's 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, at the discretion of the Chair may participate in the discussion but not the decision-making process.

If a Director fails to declare an interest that is known to the Chair, the Chair will declare that interest on the Director's behalf.

Staff

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

Managing contracts

Anyone with a conflict of interest must not be involved in managing or monitoring a contract in which they 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 and Peterborough Board of Directors

Date: July 2020

For review: July 2022

Responsible Officer

Chief Executive Officer of Healthwatch Cambridgeshire and Peterborough