

Conflicts of Interest Policy

1. Purpose of this policy

The people who work and volunteer for Healthwatch Sutton have an obligation to act in the best interests of the 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 the organisation.

Some 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 from any appearance of impropriety.

2. Declaration of interests

All staff, directors and volunteers are asked 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 to be declared.

To be effective, the declaration of interests register needs to be updated at annual intervals 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 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 website.

3. Data protection

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

4. What to do when there is a conflict of interest

If you become aware that your involvement in a discussion or decision affecting HWS presents you with a possible conflict of interest, you should declare your interest at the earliest opportunity. If the discussion or decision-making involves potential benefit to you or to a member of your family or an organisation you belong to, you should withdraw from any subsequent discussion.

4.1. Directors

Conflicted directors 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 in 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.

In the event of the Board of Directors having to decide upon a question in which a Director or a member of staff has an interest, all decisions will be made by a vote, with a simple majority required. A quorum must be present for the discussion and decision; interested parties will not be counted when deciding whether the meeting is quorate. Interested members may not vote on matters affecting their own interests and may be asked to leave the meeting while the issue is discussed.

All decisions upon a conflict of interest will be recorded by the Company Secretary and reported in the minutes of the meeting. The report will record:

- The nature and extent of the conflict
- An outline of the discussion
- The actions taken to manage the conflict

Where there are director benefits from the decision, this will be reported in the Annual Reports and accounts in accordance with [SORP \(FRS 102\) 2015](#).

4.2. 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 decision. The same applies if staff face a conflict for any other reason. They may, however, participate in decisions from which they may indirectly benefit, for example where the benefits are universal to all users, or where the benefit is minimal.

5. 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 Sutton Board of Directors: 09/03/2020

To be reviewed: 09/03/2023

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer of Healthwatch Sutton

Conflicts of Interest Declaration

Conflicts of Interest Declaration

(please use this form to declare any conflict of interest)

Have you, or people connected with you through family, business or another charity, any interest or involvement in anything locally connected with the provision of health and social care services or any other outside interests that may impact on your volunteering with Healthwatch Sutton?

Declare interest

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Signed: _____ Date: _____