

## **Council & Committee - Conflict of Interest Policy**

### **1. Policy Purpose**

Council and Committee Members have a duty to ensure that they are not placed in a position where their personal interests conflict with their duty to act in the interests of the HCPC.

The Council and Committee Member Code of conduct policy states that members must not –

- use their position for personal gain or to promote their private interests
- act in a way that may undermine public confidence in the HCPC or bring it into disrepute.

The aim of this policy is to set out the expectations regarding real or potential conflicts of interest and the process for dealing with a conflict raised in relation to a Council or Committee Member.

### **2. Scope**

The policy applies to all Council and Committee members. Compliance with this policy is compulsory for all Council and Committee members, breaches may result in a formal concern under the Council Code of Conduct.

Any request for further advice or guidance about Member's responsibilities under this policy should be directed to the Head of Governance.

### **3. What is a conflict of interest?**

A conflict of interest arises where a Council or Committee member has an interest which might influence, or be perceived to influence, that person's judgement in carrying out their role at the HCPC.

When a fair-minded and informed observer would conclude that there is a real possibility that an HCPC decision maker is or could be biased because of a particular interest then there is a conflict of interest.

When considering what might constitute a potential conflict, the seven principles of public office should be born in mind: selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership

## **4. The Importance of conflict of interest management**

The Council and Committee Member Conflict of Interest Policy supports the HCPC to ensure, and demonstrate, that its decision making is independent, transparent and enables public confidence.

The HCPC is responsible for promoting and setting standards of conduct for registrants, as well as making decisions about registrants whose fitness to practise may be impaired. It is critical that the HCPC's leadership must reflect the highest standards.

## **5. Responsibility for conflict of interest management**

It is the responsibility of all Council and Committee Members to make all reasonable efforts to ensure that they, and the HCPC, are not placed in a position where there is a conflict between the Member's responsibility to promote the best interests of the HCPC and the Member's own private interests.

Council Standing Order 15 requires members to make, and keep up to date, a declaration of their personal interests. All Members must complete a declaration on appointment and reconfirm this declaration on an annual basis.

Any changes to a Member's interests must be notified to the Head of Governance as soon as it becomes known to the Member.

The Head of Governance is responsible for maintaining the register of interests for the Council. The Governance Team will annually circulate the entries to members to review their declarations for currency.

## **6. Declaring interests at a meeting**

To promote transparency, at the beginning of the formal agenda of any meeting Members are asked to declare any interests (including any already contained within the register) that could be perceived as being relevant to any item on the agenda.

If an interest is declared, the Council will take a view on whether the interest should preclude the Member in taking part in that item of the agenda as required by Council Standing Order 15.2. Declarations and the Council's view on their materiality will be recorded in the formal minutes of the meeting.

## **7. Conflict of interest register**

On appointment all Council and Committee members will be asked to complete a declaration of interest form. This will be retained in a central register of interests.

The form required the following information on personal interests:

**1 - Relationships** - Members must declare any relationships, either personal or professional (outside of HCPC business), with any HCPC Registrant, Council or Committee Member, Employee, Partner or Supplier. Members

should also declare here if they have a partner or close family member who is a registrant and their profession.

**2 - Details of any employment** - this includes remunerated and unremunerated (voluntary) work, permanent and temporary roles, self-employment, consultancy work, Non-Executive Directorships of public or private companies.

**3A Membership of bodies exercising functions of a public nature** - this includes any role on the governing Board, Council, Committee or Group of a public body, this could be a government body, non-departmental public body, arm's length body, NHS body or regulator.

**3B - Membership of bodies which are directed to charitable purposes** - any charity trustee roles must be declared

**3C - Membership of any body whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy** - this includes membership of political parties, trade unions policy development and research groups or lobbying organisations.

**3D - Membership of bodies to which the HCPC has appointed the Member** - The HCPC takes part in cross organisational groups and contributes to the working groups of other organisations. Council Members may be asked to represent the HCPC on these Groups.

**4 - Details of any shareholdings which give a majority or controlling interest in any undertaking** - you should also include any shareholdings of a partner or close family member where those shareholdings could result in an actual or perceived conflict of interest with the HCPC's operation.

**5 - Description of any contracts for goods, services or works made between the HCPC and the Member, or an organisation from which you or your partner / close family member receive remuneration** - This does not include the remuneration Members receive to undertake their duties as a Council or Committee member. This section related to any additional work undertaken outside of this agreement, either by the Member, their partner or close family member or one of the Member's employers. For example, consultancy services.

**6 - Details of any significant political activity undertaken in the last five years** - this should include activities that are a matter of public record i.e. office holding in, public speaking in support of, or candidate on behalf of, any political party (or affiliated body) which fields candidates at local or general elections in any part of the UK or in elections to the European Parliament.

*Note - close family members for the purpose of conflicts of interest is defined as – That person's (or their partner's) dependents, and, or children, siblings and parents. Declarations made relating to a Partner or Close family member will not be published on the website register of interests.*

## **8. Publication of the register**

The HCPC is committed to transparency in its decision making. To enhance transparency, the register of interests is published on the HCPC website.

**3rd December 2020**