

This policy applies to the Trustees, Council members, members of committees and working parties of the Healthcare Infection Society (HIS), and those invited to complete External Peer Review. It is based on the ICSA Guidance Note “Model Conflict of Interest Policy”.

Why we have a Policy

Trustees and committee members have a legal obligation to act in the best interests of HIS, and in accordance with the HIS Constitution, and to avoid situations where there may be a potential conflict of interest. Conflicts of interests may arise where an individual’s personal or family interests and/or loyalties conflict with those of HIS. Such conflicts may create problems; they can:

- inhibit free discussion;
- result in decisions or actions that are not in the interests of HIS; and
- risk the impression that HIS 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

Accordingly, we are asking trustees and committee members to declare their interests, and any gifts or hospitality received in connection with their role in HIS. 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 Secretary or Chief Executive for confidential guidance.

This register of interests shall also be used to record all gifts of a value over £50 received by the trustees and committee members.

Interests and gifts will be recorded on the charity’s register of interests, which will be maintained by the Chief Executive. The register will be accessible by members of HIS on request.

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 act in the best interests of HIS. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

What to do if you face a Conflict of Interest

You should not be involved in decisions that relate to an area where there is a conflict of interest. You should declare your interest at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from any subsequent discussion. You may, however, participate in discussions from which you may indirectly benefit, for example where the benefits are universal to all members, or where your benefit is minimal.

If you fail to declare an interest that is known to the Secretary, he/she will declare that interest.

Decisions taken where a trustee or committee member has an interest

In the event of the Council having to decide upon a question in which a trustee or committee member has an interest, all decisions will be made by vote, with a simple majority required. A quorum must be present for the discussion and decision; interested board members may not vote on matters affecting their own interests.

All decisions under a conflict of interest will be 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 a trustee or committee member benefits from the decision, this will be reported in the Annual Report and Accounts in accordance with the current Charities SORP.

Where a member of staff is connected to a party involved in the supply of a service or product to the charity, this information will also be fully disclosed in the Annual Report and Accounts.

Independent external moderation will be used where conflicts cannot be resolved through the usual procedures.

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.

Payments to trustees and committee members

Trustees and committee members may claim for travel and subsistence expenses incurred whilst undertaking HIS business, in accordance with the Travel and Expenses Policy.

The Society is willing to **pay the employer of a trustee** to compensate them for time spent by the trustee on HIS business outside their employer's institution. This will enable the employer to pay for other individuals to cover the trustee's work in their absence. The trustee does not gain financially from this arrangement. (The Charity Commission confirmed that this policy is acceptable in their letter to HIS dated 12.10.09.)

The Annual Report and Accounts will include the following details:

- Amounts paid to trustees as remuneration for their services (2008/9 = £nil).
- Amounts paid to trustees' employers for time spent on HIS business.
- Total payment to trustees as reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses incurred within the Travel and Expenses Policy.

Trustees may accept fees/honoraria offered to them by other organisations for services provided in a personal capacity (e.g. giving a lecture).

Approved by Council 10.03.10, updated 01.04.11

Reviewed and updated 15.02.18