

REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST - Conflict of Interest Policy

Conflict of Interest

REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST avoids actual and potential conflicts of interest where possible. We act honestly, ethically and transparently. We declare both actual and perceived conflicts of interest and take appropriate action to manage the conflict

Management members, particularly those with responsibility for budgets or contracts, must take proper care that any conflict of interest, actual or perceived, does not arise from their position with REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST or membership of or connection with other bodies and individuals outside the Organisation.

Each year REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST requires Management members to complete a declaration of interests form to identify any potential conflicts of interest.

All staff, regardless of position or seniority, are under a duty to disclose conflicts of interest, actual or possible, to ensure the organisation acts in a manner which is honest, ethical and transparent.

What is a conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest is a situation:

- A. That prevents, may prevent or may give a perception that it prevents your ability to make an unbiased decision in the performance of your duties for REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST
- B. Where you promote or pursue, or may be perceived as promoting or pursuing, your own interests ahead of those of REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST, other employees of REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST or clients
- C. Where you use, or may be perceived as using your position with REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST, its resources, its name or reputation, for personal gain or purposes which are not in the interests of REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST or which may damage the reputation
- D. Where your professional position means you cannot act in certain Circumstances.

A conflict of interest can therefore be both perceived or actual. Its existence does not necessarily arise due to unethical or unlawful behaviour, it may just be a coming together of circumstances.

The important matter is not how the conflict arose, but what impact this conflict may have or be perceived to have.

It is possible to prevent a conflict of interest, either perceived or actual, by being transparent about the conflict. By appropriately managing the conflict, you may still be able to perform a function or task where a conflict exists.

It is essential that actual or potential conflicts of interest are brought to the attention of REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST so that a determination can be made as to what action should be taken to manage the conflict or if appropriate, avoid the conflict.

What does a "relative" mean?

For the purposes of this policy, a "relative" means a family member of the individual concerned:

- A. Spouse or partner
- B. Siblings, including step siblings
- C. Spouses or partners of siblings, including step siblings
- D. Children, including step children
- E. Parents, including step parents
- F. Grandparents, grandchildren, cousins, aunts and uncles.

What happens if I fail to disclose the conflict?

Should you fail to disclose a conflict and go ahead and act, you may be subject to disciplinary proceedings. It is difficult to prescribe every situation where a conflict may arise and each matter will be considered on its own merit and individual circumstances.

Employment

Staff must ensure they take care not to solicit or recommend any person for employment by the organisation or for admission to it, other than through the proper procedures and must disclose if a candidate is related to them when providing references. Trustees have an obligation to act in the best interests of REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST and in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Staff have similar obligations.

Trustees must at all times act in the best interests of REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST and its beneficiaries, present and future. Trustees need therefore to be sensitive to the possibility that activities outside the organisation (including holding office or being otherwise involved in organisations, companies or political parties) could be perceived as having a bearing on – or coming into conflict with – the objects and integrity of the organisation.

Trustees have a duty in law to avoid conflicts of interest and must not take part in any discussion or decision in which there is such a conflict. A conflict of interest arises:

- (i) where a trustee (or employee) has a material interest in or stands to gain financially from any decision of the charity or,
- (ii) where the trustee has an interest outside the charity which is in conflict with their position as a trustee.

At the start of each Executive Committee meeting, members will be asked to declare whether any agenda items raise a potential conflict of interest. This will be recorded and minuted. Where a conflict of interest occurs, the trustee concerned should withdraw from the meeting for that item on the agenda.

It is the potential, rather than the actual, benefit from which the conflict of interest arises which requires authority. In order to avoid a breach of trust and to ensure transparency, authority is required where there is a possibility of benefit.

Declaring Interests

On appointment to the REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST Executive Committee or to the REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST staff team individuals will be asked to read and comply with this policy and complete a Declaration of Interests form. The register of interests will be reviewed annually. Any changes to circumstances or new interests should be declared to the Administrator as soon as practicably possible. Individuals will be asked to complete and sign a new Declaration of Interests form.

This policy has been approved for issue by the board of trustees of REG COMMUNITY SUPPORT TRUST and is subject to change as and when the trustees see fit.