

Conflict of Interests

What is a conflict of interest?

The term conflict of interests refers to situations where conflict arises between public duty and private interest.

The term refers to circumstances where a member of staff could be influenced, or could reasonably be perceived to be influenced, by private interest when performing an official function.

Conflicts of interests can involve pecuniary interests (i.e. financial interests or other material benefits or costs) or non-pecuniary interests.

They can involve the interests of the staff member or his or her immediate family or relatives, friends, business partners or associates.

Animosity as well as friendship can give rise to an actual or reasonably perceived conflict of interests.

Where you make a decision that could affect the rights or interests of any person, you must apply the principles of procedural fairness. A key element of procedural fairness is the so-called 'rule against bias'. The basis of this rule is that even if a person is able to make an impartial judgement on a matter affecting his or her interests, the perceived bias would cast doubt on the impartiality of the decision.

All members of staff are responsible for declaring any conflict, or reasonably perceived conflict of interests, that may arise in their work.

Common conflicts

Recruitment

Where you are on an interview panel, you must disclose to your line manager and the other members of the panel (and in particular the independent member) at the time of reviewing the applications if the applicant is your personal friend or past or present close work colleague.

It is not appropriate to be on an interview panel, or to ask a close colleague to replace you, where any applicant for the position is your relative (including a parent, sibling, child or past or present partner). It is acceptable to be a referee for somebody being interviewed, provided other referees are contacted prior to that person being appointed to the position. You should give the last reference.

Personal relationships

You must disclose where you are in an

intimate relationship (or some other relationship that might lead to a perception of conflict) with a member of staff with whom you have a supervisory or management responsibility, or for whom you provide a reference.

Contracting

Where you are involved in the assessment or approval of a tender or contract, you must make a disclosure immediately you become aware, if any person who has an interest in or may benefit from the contract is a relative, personal friend or business partner. In these circumstances you **must** remove yourself from the process.

Further information contact

**Employee Performance
and Conduct Directorate**

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