

## NHS Frimley Conflicts of Interest – Management Guidance

### **Definition**

A conflict of interest occurs where an individual's ability to exercise judgement, or act in a role, is or could be impaired or otherwise influenced by his or her involvement in another role or relationship. The individual does not need to exploit his or her position or obtain an actual benefit, financial or otherwise, for a conflict of interest to occur e.g.

- **Financial interest** – direct financial benefit e.g. shareholder of organisation in receipt of funding, in receipt of secondary income, sponsored research etc.
- **Non-financial professional interest** – e.g. increasing professional reputation or status or promoting career
- **Non-financial personal interest** – e.g. member of voluntary sector organisation or lobbying/pressure group
- **Indirect interest** – close association with another individual who has an interest e.g. close family, friends

A perception of wrong-doing, impaired judgement or undue influence can be as detrimental as any of them actually occurring. If in doubt, it is better to assume the existence of a conflict of interest and manage it appropriately rather than ignore it.

### **Background**

### **Who is potentially conflicted?**

**Why?**

**What steps have been taken to date to manage this potential conflict?**

The following decision matrix should be used:

Example	Interest			
	Financial	Non-financial professional	Non-financial personal	Indirect
Needs assessment	Fully participate	Fully participate	Fully participate	Fully participate
Review health outcomes	Fully participate	Fully participate	Fully participate	Fully participate
Design services	Discuss and vote	Discuss and vote	Discuss and vote	Discuss and vote
Decide priorities	Discuss but cannot vote	Discuss and vote	Discuss and vote	Discuss and vote
Review commissioning proposals	Remain but cannot speak or vote	Remain but cannot speak or vote	Remain but cannot speak or vote	Discuss and vote
Performance management	Remain but cannot speak or vote (unless interest is deemed not prejudicial)	Remain but cannot speak or vote (unless interest is deemed not prejudicial)	Remain but cannot speak or vote (unless interest is deemed not prejudicial)	Discuss and vote
Review prioritised business cases	Leave the room	Remain but cannot speak or vote	Remain but cannot speak or vote (unless interest is deemed not prejudicial)	Discuss and vote
Procurement/contracting	Leave the room	Remain but cannot speak or vote (unless interest is deemed not prejudicial)	Remain but cannot speak or vote (unless interest is deemed not prejudicial)	Discuss and vote

**What further mitigation could be taken?**

Transparency of decision making is key. The general safeguards will vary to some extent depending on at what stage in the commissioning cycle the decisions are being made.

Consider the 'Six Rs':

- **Register** – Where details of the existence of a possible or potential conflict of interest are formally registered.
- **Restrict** – Where restrictions are placed on the public official/Board member's involvement in the matter.
- **Recruit** – Where a disinterested third party is used to oversee part or all of the process that deals with the matter.
- **Remove** – Where a public official/Board member chooses to be removed from the matter.
- **Relinquish** – Where the public official/Board member relinquishes the private interest that is creating the conflict.
- **Resign** – Where the public official/Board member resigns from their position with the organisation.

Steps taken to date:

Further mitigation proposed: